

PUBLISHER'S NOTE: American lads have always eagerly read stories of life among the street-heroes of our great cities. Thus opportunity to be more popular than ever, and to be more interesting than ever, to boys who have never left New York. To them the Bowery stands for all that is adventurous and mysterious, while its jostling crowds are the various settings for exciting drama of real life. Believing that an up-to-date weekly would be gladly welcomed, it devoted exclusively to stories inspired upon the startling adventures experienced by wide-awake street boys, we have launched the Bowery Boy Library. It speaks for itself.



BOWERY BOY

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No. 75.

NEW YORK, March 23, 1907.

Price Five Cents.

BOWERY BILLY ON DANGEROUS GROUND;

OR,

The Detective's Double.

By JOHN R. CONWAY, Private Detective.

CHARACTERS IN THIS STORY.

Bowery Billy, an adventurous street Arab, whose career in the midst of the whirlpools and storms of a great city brought him to daily contact with such a variegated life as no other possible setting can be found, that he has naturally got into the way of acting the part of a young giant, and took the hardest danger in, mixing up with trouble, and he was always to be found in the very forefront of the most hazardous movements of a criminal career in their outer limits, both of heart, and ready at all times to take chances for a friend.

Mr. George May is the headstrong detective, who has over been Billy a street and adventurist, and who, in this story, has a mystery of his own, which Bowery Billy solves.

Paul Brown, Billy's close friend, who is Billy's confidential informant.

Erish Seneca, who, for Billy, has all the older wisdom in the bowery, and is a great help to him.

Madam Peacock, whom Billy has long been trying to "get right," and who has been a great help to him.

"Kidney Jones" Randolph, a famous crack, known in the town as a certain institution up the Hudson, which he knows more than anybody.

Watts, an official in the same institution.

Johnson, a guard on the prison wall.

Cap'n Joe Langdon, of the tug *Ward Ellen*, whose powers of observation are extraordinary.

Brooks Mallon, his many friends, the dockhand, and **Peter Barker**, the smuggler on board the tug.

Mr. Brown DeLisle, with more money than good sense.

CHAPTER I.

IN THE FOG.

There had been a late heavy snow-storm the day before, but the south wind suddenly blew, bringing in a heavy sea-fog with it, and now, what with the fog and the mud rising from the fast melting snow, one could scarcely see one's length before one.

The Hudson for many miles beyond the great city was choked with this blanket of fog. River traffic was practically suspended.

At the big prison on the Hudson, men were working about on a new wall, wheeling dirt, breaking stone, doing a thousand and one laborious tasks. They were gangs of shaven, silent men, who were striped suits and Scotch caps.

As the day advanced and the fog grew thicker, most of the gangs at work in the yards of the great penitentiary were driven back to their cells, counted, and shut in.

Some work on the outer-wall, however, could not be abandoned in a moment. The guards were doubled along

the wall, and the overseers kept sharper watch upon their gangs.

When a man's business is to watch other men with a loaded gun in his hand, and he sees those men under his eye driven about like beasts, with rough words and crosses, he learns, after a time, to look upon the unfortunate where he guards as so many cattle.

To a certain guard who marched steadily his beat near the river front on this foggy day, the gangs that passed him, tugging at the heavy blocks, or otherwise engaged in the routine work, were mere moving machines. He hadn't a single interest in a single member of the convict gangs.

One of the prison-officers stopped to pass the time of day with him—although this conversing between overseer and guard was against the rule of the institution.

"Nasty day, Johnson," said the officer, "beating his hands to warm them.

"You bet it is. And the fog's as damp as the grave. Ugh!"

"I'll be glad to hear the call for my gang—hang 'em! They can't do much out here, anyway, and they're ugly to-day."

"Most always are ugly, heh!" suggested the guard, laughing.

"Oh, I treat the dogs as well as anybody else. But I've got some hard cases."

"Long termers?"

"Some. There's *yoza*. He's got a stretch of twenty years, I understand. And he isn't getting anything off for good behavior, either."

"Bad man, eh?"

"An all round crook. Confidence man, burglar, cracks man. Why! he's Silent Jimmy Radcliffe's 'Notorious'!"

"Humph!" grunted the guard. "A man's a fool not to take things easy if he's sent here. Board and lodging free, and nothing to worry him!"

Borif laughed.

"Get!" exclaimed the officer, "you can scarcely see them posts yonder, it's so foggy."

"Thick as mush," was the rejoinder. "The posts look like your boys, Harris."

"Heh! they do look something like men standing there—and I swear there's more good to 'em than there is to most of these toughs."

"What's that?" asked the guard suddenly.

"Sounds like a tug out there."

"Can't be one of the construction tugs. They wouldn't try to get here to-day."

"Nops."

"She's a good ways in shore."

"It's blamed nasty getting around out there on the river," returned Harris. "Lost her bearings, maybe."

"Say! how this fog does turn one around," said John-

sen. "Do you know, I had no idea there was a post as far out there as that one yonder."

"You're seeing things."

"Well, it's funny! I could have sworn there were only three posts visible from here just now."

"Well?"

"Count 'em yourself, mind! there's four."

"The fog must be lifting. You can see farther."

"Well, it can lift a good bit more before it lifts," laughed the guard.

A gang rang faintly through the heavy air.

"Was that the tug?" demanded the officer.

"Guess you'll find that the signal from the office," returned his mate.

"Ah! you're right. There she goes again. That's for me—glad of it!"

Again the bell struck solemnly. The officer hurried away with a wave of his hand. The guard turned to resume his pacing again.

"Thunder! what's the matter with my dashed eyes?" he muttered. "There's only three of them blamed posts now."

He moved forward to the dock's edge and walked along, tapping each of the three piles as he passed. There was no fourth—yet he could be sure he counted a fourth—and came exactly to the spot where it stood.

Out on the river the "chug, chug, chug" of the tug grew fainter. She had evidently taken warning that the shore was near, and had shot out into midstream again.

"Tramp, tramp, tramp!"

Out of the mist came an uncertain, wavering column of men, in single file, left hand on shoulder of the man in front, right hand bearing some tool that had been used in the work—the whole gang following a beaten path up toward one of the nearer buildings. The rank wound away in the mist like some monster that had come in from deep water with the fog.

The guards walking beside it were the feelers, or claws, of the monster. Harris brought up the rear—with pursed lips. The fog was so thick that he could not see a third of the length of the line. And he had miscounted his men. There seemed to be one missing.

In the hall of the dormitory the gas-lights were blazing, and the gang was ranged against the wall. Most of the men were the usual sullen prison scowl. So, however, grinned covertly, however, and the adept, the art of communicating without the aid of the lips, passed the word along that one of their number had disappeared, even before the perturbed Harris and the other officers were cure of this astonishing fact.

"No use counting them again, Harris," exclaimed the deputy-warden, who had been called. "You can't make thirty-five men thirtysix. What have you and your assistants been doing. Who's gone?"

"I don't know, sir," exclaimed the astounded Harris. "Here! call the roll."

The roll was called. No. 2042 did not answer.

"You haven't by any chance given him extra work?" demanded the deputy.

"I should say not!" growled Harris.

"Ring the bell!" commanded the deputy, and the next instant the signal which notified every officer in the penitentiary—and every convict, too—that one of the prisoners had made a break for liberty, rang dully through the foggy atmosphere.

Work all over the penitentiary came to an abrupt conclusion. The gangs were hurried to their cells, and counted three times for surety. One missing man placed the thousands of convicts under suspicion—for the time, at least. The governors never know when to look for a general uprising, or a well-planned jail delivery of astonishing magnitude. That so few of either are successful is due to the eternal vigilance of the officials.

Every convict was sent to his cell. The high officials took council, while the others and the guards searched for the missing man.

2042 was gone. Gone in his convict suit, for there was not a civilian garment in the penitentiary unaccounted for.

Men have become so tired of those frowning walls and barred windows that they have committed suicide. But 2042 was not one to do that. He was not that kind of a man—being shrewd, long-headed, and desperate.

"So much for this blanked fog!" declared the chief officers.

CHAPTER II.

IN THE RIVER.

"Clang! clang! dan-an an-gl!"

The beat of the great signal-gong floated out across the river through the saturated atmosphere. Its tones were well known to the boatmen used to passing the penitentiary.

But they gave little heed to its voice to-day. There was little interest for them in the fact that a convict had made an attempt to escape. They had all they could do to work their craft up or down the river, and dodge other craft, the presence of which they distinguished by the tapping of bells, or the hooting of sirens.

The clangor of the alarm-bell particularly interested a single individual upon the river, however. Indeed, he was really in the river itself.

The water was cold. It could have been little worse in midwinter. For, although this day had been so mild, the rise in temperature had not as yet affected the current which came down from the melting snows of the Adirondacks.

Before the bell began to sound, the man who was so

interested had been swimming in the river. This was not a sane thing to do on such a day. It wasn't a pleasant occupation—oh, no!

But the man had strong reasons for not going back to shore, having once plunged into the cold river. There are dungeons under the fortresslike walls of some of the penitentiary buildings; there have been, too, punishments of the lash for recaptured prisoners. At the least, the harshness of the officials and their watchfulness would be redoubled.

No. Chance had stepped in and given this man a show for escape. He was the sort of a man that small things do not daunt. He had compassed great things in his peculiar line. He was not afraid of death—not he!

Unlike many of his ilk that go to prison for long terms, he had been stripped of his ill-gotten goods before his incarceration. There was no well-paid friend outside the penitentiary walls to aid and abet an attempt to escape.

He had not even had sufficient money to pay for a first-class lawyer to defend him. Therefore, as he gloomily said, the police had "railroaded him through."

The fellow who had worked with him had escaped the hand of the law; but even did 2042 trust him, the poor scamp had no money with which to aid his incarcerated partner. 2042 had served a stretch or two before; but never had he faced such a long incarceration, nor felt himself so helpless.

He was a determined and desperate man, therefore. He had been put into one of the hardest-worked gangs—he was a muscular fellow—and under an ugly taskmaster, the better to discipline his spirit. Here one's spirit must either submit, or be broken.

As well as he could he shirked the work put upon him—not enough to be punished with the dark cell or solitary confinement, but so that he was marked untrustworthy and undependable.

This gave him no chance to ever work alone; but he did not want to work alone. A single man can be watched more easily by the guards than a group of men.

In this fog, however, it did not much matter whether a man was alone or not. A guard could not observe him many yards away.

No. 2042 stepped aside from his fellows, and stood upon the very edge of the old wooden dock. His absence was unnoticed, because Harris, in charge of the crew, was negligent of his duty. Those under him believed that Mr. Harris and 2042 were together.

Like a statue the man stood on the stringpiece of the dock. His striped clothing took on a dull gray hue in the fog. He was but a misty figure as he stared off into the thick haze.

But although the fog shrouded everything like a blanket, it carried sounds marvellously. Not only did 2042 hear the tug blundering in near shore—nearer shore than

she would have been allowed to come in ordinary weather for the guards would have warned her off unless she had business at the penitentiary dock—but he heard distinctly the conversation of Harris and Johnson, the guard.

And to his amusement—at first—he heard himself referred to as a port! He knew that from where the officers stood they could not possibly see but three of the piles which stood at a man's height above the wharf. He was the fourth!

And with that discovery a plan was born in his mind and leaped to life fully fledged! The tug blundered in, nearer and nearer. The waves lapped at his feet.

There was one certain risk to run—beside the chill of the rushing river. He could not turn to see if he was being watched. He robed risk dropping suddenly over the verge of the wharf and swimming quietly away from the shore.

And the guard's rifle was loaded!

But 2012 had raked death by worse forms than that by bullet. Indeed, to plunge into the river on such a day, and with so meager a chance for successful escape, needed more courage than that which urges a soldier toward a flaming battery.

The chug, chug, chug of the tug was a call to the prisoner, however. Just as he stood, in striped suit, cap, and heavy prison-shoes, he dropped over the edge of the wharf, and hung by his hands for a moment with his legs in the water to their knees.

That moment gave him time to kick off his shoes. They would have borne down even the stoutest swimmer.

Then, quietly, and without a ripple, he lowered his entire body into the river, and pushed off from the shore. In a moment he was shut out from the sight of anybody on the wharf—and the wharf was shut out from his sight, too!

At the first plunge he was chilled by the ice-cold river. But his lungs and heart were good. He had not been long enough confined for these organs to have been affected. And he was a bold and practised swimmer.

Out of the fog came the long wail of the tug's whistle. He knew she was coming about, her captain having in some way become wise to the fact that he was poking her nose too far in-shore.

She would shoot out again into midstream, while the man who had depended upon reaching her was paddling with comparatively feeble strokes behind!

Beside the beating of the tug's propeller blades, his poor arms made but little progress. He knew it, and still had a chance to return, yet kept on!

That was his instant choice between what looked like certain death, and further incarceration.

But the swimmer kept doggedly on. The beating of the tug's propeller did not recede rapidly after all—

and there was a reason for this which the man's clever brain easily fathomed.

The tug was trying to make the middle of the river and, not knowing exactly where she was, the captain did not let her go down with the current and tide, but both these forces were carrying the swimmer swiftly down stream.

So he kept somewhat parallel with the tug. He could hear her engine-bell, and the hoarse commands of her captain. Even the splash of the water pouring off her deck rang in his ears every time he rose breast high in the river.

And he strained his muscles more desperately to close up the space between him and the craft which was his only hope.

CHAPTER III.

ON THE TUG.

Captain Jim Lamagan, of the tug *Mary Ellen*, grasping the wheel-spokes of the tug's steering apparatus, cursed steadily, fluently, and with serious emphasis.

Benjie Höller, the mate, peered up into the pilot-box, turned aside, and grinned at the nearest hand.

"Jumpin' Jehoshaphat!" whispered Benjie, who, although he had been a riverman for fifteen years, had never left off layseed speech and manners, "there's er blue streak er perfumery fellerin' this here tug, Louey, that'd do for a steamship pennant. Sho! hear him, will yer?"

"First time Cap'n Jim's lost his way on this river. I reckon, since we come down from Nyack with a string of brick barges in the big blizzard of '88. We got so twisted that day that when we bumped into a dock an' carried erway ten feet er rail off either bow, we didn't know whether we'd struck Hoboken, 'r Staten Island."

"Which was it, Louey? I was laid up with rheumatics that spell."

"Twasn't neither. 'Twas a Fourteenth street ferry-dock. Hi! there's a gong ringing in-shore of us, Matey."

"Betcher! And I know it—yep! there she goes ergin," declared Benjie, clambering hastily to the pilot-box, his big boots clumping and his rubber clothing swishing against the ladder.

"What the eternally blessed jib-backstay d' you want?" roared Cap'n Jim, poking his head out of the after window.

"We're passin' the jail!" howled Benjie, with one palm beside his writhing lips to help his voice carry into the windrow.

"That's where you second-story thieves ought ter be—th' whole kit an' bilin' of yer!" declared Lamagan.

"I tell you that's the jail—the penitentiary," cried the mate.

"And you oughter be there!"

"Pshaw, Jim!" objected Benjie.

"You're a past participated fool!" bellowed Lannigan.

"That ain't Oursing over there."

"It's the jail, I tell yer!"

"It's yer dashed grandmother's black cat's kitten!" bellowed Lannigan—or words to that effect.

"I know that bell," declared Holler doggedly.

"What bell—yer long-drawn-out hayseed. What bell?"

"The signal-gong they ring for the gangs in the yard. By thunder, Jim! we've heard it often enough."

"Oh, we have, have we?" witheringly.

"Yep."

"Maybe you have, Benjie Holler. But I never had no experience at Sing Sing yet—yer left-handed, aphy-footed, pen head!"

"Jumping Jehoshaphat!" exclaimed the mate suddenly.

"What's eatin' yer?" growled Lannigan.

"There it is again."

"There's what again?"

"The gong. Now she'll spike twice—listen!"

"Aw, go on!"

"Put yer head out o' that window, yer ossified clump!" cried the mate, getting angry himself now. "You'll hear her—thar she goes!"

At this Cap'n Jim was startled into obeying, and heard the gong mean faintly through thick mist.

"Holy heavens! where's that from?"

"The jail, I tell you!" declared Benjie.

"You scrupus!" roared Lannigan, shaking his hairy fist out of the window. "Don't you tell me that. I know full well I'm miles from it!"

"You keep on an' ye'll bump th' Mary Ellen's nose under the new wall they're buildin'."

"Ye talk like a monstrosity, Benjie."

"And you think yer th' only cat that knows it's way home. Huh! I could take this tug in better than you an' have my eyes bandaged, at that."

"Ye might as well have 'em bandaged in this double-blinded fog," observed the captain, without taking any particular offense at Benjie's criticism of his ability to navigate. "And if I didn't have no bit of money tied up in the old hag I'd let yer try runnin' her—and be banged to ye both, Benjie Holler!"

But he pulled the bell for the engineer to run slower.

"Come about, I tell ye!" cried the mate. "Hark! hear that rattle! That's a sojer's gun striking against his buttons. We're almost into the wall!"

"Chase yerself, Benjie! They don't have sojers there. Ye'll be tellin' me we're down to Fort Hamilton next."

"Well, they have guards on that sea-wall."

"They do, then."

"Ho!"

Both men shouted it. A sudden, noisy clamor of bells

broke out ashore—this time no solemn signal, but an alarm that every riverman understood.

"What did I tell ye?" yelled Benjie Holler. "There's a convict escaped."

"Well, if you ever get yer deserts and have a cell over there, I hopeyer don't git away," growled Lannigan, twitching over the wheel.

He was convinced that he had been wrong in his course at last, and he was not happy about it. The tug *Mary Ellen* began to claw off shore.

Lannigan hated to drift down the river rapidly. All manner of craft was ahead of him, and a collision might occur at any moment.

So he had the engineer run her slowly, and he pushed farther out toward midstream. Meanwhile, the ringing of the alarm bell continued from the prison.

Holler climbed down to the deck again, and Louey met him, grinning.

"He's in er nice state o' mind—the old man, heh!" suggested the deck-hand, casting off a huge chew from his plug, and passing knife and tobacco to the mate companionably.

"Don't blame him. When a feller gets er-twist in his course on this ole river it don't make him none too happy feelin'."

"Hi, gay!" exclaimed Louey suddenly. "Hear that?"

"What's doin' now?" granted Holler, gazing shoreward—not that he could see twenty feet into the mist, however.

Again the sound was repeated. It was a faint hail—the cry of a truck in distress.

"Somebody overboard!" gasped Louey. "Tell th' Cap ter stop."

"Tell him yerself. He's bit my head off now an' chewed it up."

Again the cry rang out:

"Help—rip—rip!"

"Man in the water, sure's you live, Louey?" admitted Holler.

"Jumping Jehoshaphat!"

The mate did not wait now. He yelled down the hatch for the engineer to stop.

"Stop her! back up!" yelled Benjie.

Out popped Lannigan's head from the pilot-box again.

"You cock-eyed, lop-eared son of perdition!" he roared.

"What d'ye think yer doin'? Driven' er yoke of osen back on the farm? Yer bloomin' hayseed—"

"Man overboard!" interrupted Benjie's strenuous voice.

"Who's overboard?" demanded Lannigan, as the tug floated without any headway but that of the current.

"How d' I know?" snapped the mate, as he and Louey began putting over the small tender.

"Where?"

"In th' drink, confound us!" yelled back the mate, and he and Louey tumbled into the boat, and pushed off.

Through the dank atmosphere again sounded the long drawn cry:

"Hel-el-ep!"

CHAPTER IV.

THE SWIMMERLIST.

Any man who would voluntarily take a swim in the Hudson such a day was either a madman, or foolish enough to make a freak political bet.

Therefore, the mate of the tug and the deck-hand were sure that some accident had occurred, and that the man crying for help was worthy of their every assistance.

It was easy enough to imagine a collision or upset in this fog. It was so thick that they could scarcely feel their way through it—let alone see!

Benjie Hotter lifted up a stentorian shout, which vibrated over the murky river as loudly as any fog-horn. Again came the cry—a little down-stream.

"He's drifting, Benjie," said Louey, giving a heavy pull to his starboard oar.

"Ahoj, *Mary Ellen*!" roared Benjie, tagging in the other direction, and shouting through the tube of his enclosed hands.

"All right—ye fresh water lobster!" was Lannigan's reply.

"Down!" cried Benjie.

"D'ye tink I'd be goss' up?" roared Cap'n Jim, adding sundry opprobrious epithets that chanced to come to his hand.

"He-el-ep!" sounded the cry, fainter, but not so far be yond the small boat.

"Pull, Louey!" admonished Benjie.

The deck-hand bent to his oars, and the boat shot down with the current.

"Keep hawling!" yelled Benjie, intent on making the drowning man hear.

"Here!" was the startling reply, almost within ear's reach of the boat, and between it and the tug.

"We've got beyond him!" sang out Louey, and gave the boat's head another jerk around.

Benjie, who was standing upright, came near taking a header.

"Here!" he exclaimed, in disgust. "You'll have an other man overboard."

"See the feller?" demanded Louey excitedly.

"Ah!"

Benjie seized the boat-hook, and made a jab for something floating in the river.

"Ouch!" shrieked the something. "What th' blazes you doin'—trying to harpoon me, ye blithering idiot?"

A man's wet face and head, and an arm clothed in a coarse gray sleeve, came into view.

"Here he is!" yelled Benjie.

"Don't you spear me again, you galoot!" exclaimed

the panting man in the water. "I'd just as soon be drowned dead as assassinated with that hook-hook. Drop it, I say!"

"Give me your hand!" exclaimed the excited mate of the *Mary Ellen*. "You're the windiest feller I ever pulled out of the drink."

"Ugh!" grunted the fellow, coming over the gunwale like a huge flopping fish. "You come near puncturing me first that time, brother. Ugh!"

He was dressed only in coarse gray underclothing and coarse socks. The underclothing was rent in several places, and Louey, who was an observant man, noted that the incisions were clean, as though made with a keen knife-blade.

He lay panting in the boat's bottom while it was turned and aimed for the tug again.

"Nice weather we're having!" said Benjie, at last, as the fellow sat up.

He was a smooth faced man—well shaven, in fact—and his hair was short, but inclined to curl now that it was wet. The cold and the river seemed to have given him a puttylike complexion.

"Do—do ye often do this?" pursued the mate of the *Mary Ellen*, with perfect gravity.

"Do what?"

"Go swimmin' this way?"

"When I go swimmin' I usually go in the water," granted the stranger. "Say! you're too smart. Let me git me wind."

Louey had flung a piece of sailcloth over the shivering form of the man, and was now pulling hard for the tug, which, lying some distance away, occasionally blew her whistle.

"And in yer underclo's?" suggested Benjie mildly.

"Well, if you must know," granted the man, "I was asleep."

"In the bed of the river?" queried Benjie, his weather-beaten face wrinkling into a momentary spasm which passed as a grin among those who knew him well, but was apt to get him into a free-for-all fight among strangers.

"I sh'd think that one would be hurt ye," said the wet stranger, between chattering teeth. "If youse fellers hadn't come along I'd been sleeping there by now."

"Where'd you come from?" demanded Benjie.

"That's what I'm trying to tell you. I was on the barge *Mohawk Queen*. There was two of us. I was awake all right. This here fog come in early, you know."

"Yep."

"My partner took his trick this noon, and I went to bed. Next thing I knowed I was in the river—and it was wet."

"Run down? My?"

"Now! the barge is all right, I guess. But I forgot to tie myself in."

"Tie yourself in!"

"Yep. I walk in me sleep. Can't you see?"

"Not very fun—in this fog."

"I'm what they call a somnambulist," said the stranger, with conviction. "Been one since I was a kid."

"A som—somnambulist—whatcha call 'em?"

"Somnambulist."

"Does it hurt?"

"It hurt me this time, old feller."

"Did ye ever walk overboard before?"

"Yep. It scared me so I ain't never drunk water since if I could help it," observed the wet man significantly.

"Guess the cap'n's got something different aboard the tug. Here we are!" exclaimed Benjie, as the *Mary Eliza* suddenly appeared in the fog.

"What ye got there?" demanded Cap'n Jun, leaning half his body out of the pilot-box window.

"Er s'nambulist," replied Benjie gravely.

"What th'—say! don't you call me names, ye long-lagged, slab-sided hoodoo?"

"I ain't," declared Benjie, either denying the charge that he had vaporated his captain, or that he was the kind of a thing Lannigan said he was!

"Then, what have ye fished out'n the drink?"

"A s'nambulist," repeated Benjie doggedly.

"Say! I've heard tell of Republicans, Democrats, and Hard-shell Baptists, but that's a new sect on me," declared Lannigan.

"It must be suthin' like the last you mentioned," observed Loney. "We fished it out of the water, all right."

"Has it got fins?"

"Say, you fellows may think you're a funny crowd," growled the wet man, as he clambered aboard the tug. "But I ain't in any mood for fun. I want dryin'—outside and in."

"All right, old man," said Lannigan, pulling the bell for the engineer to start her ahead again. "Benjie'll tend to both sides. I'll see you later."

CHAPTER V.

SO CARELESS!

Benjie bundled the roared swimmer below, took him to his own berth, and rolled him in blankets after helping him to strip off his flannels. He doted him heartily with something from a flat bottle which he rummaged for in the captain's cupboard.

"Ah!" grunted the man. "If I'd only fallen overboard into that stuff I'd drunk it up, and walked ashore dry-shod."

"And there's a wanny like ye would be glad to try it," grunted Benjie. "I'll hang these things before the boiler. But there's a stink of my duds you can put on if ye feel like gittin' up."

Although so rough of speech, the tug's mate was con-

siderate of the visitor's misfortune. Benjie placed underclothes, socks, a half-worn suit and boots—even a cap—at the man's disposal. Then he climbed to the pilot-box.

"What do ye make of him, Benjie?" demanded Lannigan.

"He has a thirst to beat any Mick I ever see," declared the former-mate of the *Mary Eliza*.

"Is that so? And, whose whisky is he drinkin'?"

"Not mine," declared Benjie cheerfully.

"Here! you take the wheel," commanded Lannigan. "No knowin' when one of us might git snake-bit out here, and there's nothin' like spirits for a snake-bite—so they say."

"Ye never tried it, Lannigan."

"But I've been warnin' 'em off fer many th' year. They say a pint o' prevention is worth a gallon o' cure."

"It's gallons o' the cure, then, you've been takin'," Lannigan, grunted his mate, seizing the spokes of the wheel. "Keep her about so. Huh! hear that?"

Across the fog-embroidered river drifted again the sound of the alarm-bell on the roof of the penitentiary building.

"Did Loney tell ye what he says of himself?"

"Who?"

"Th' s'nambulist," said Benjie.

"Yep."

"What d' ye think of it?"

"Tis a doc imagination he has," said Lannigan.

"Well—a might be," said Benjie slowly, as though willing to give the somnambulist the benefit of any doubt there might be.

"Ye have a trusting disposition, Benjie."

"Have I?"

"Ye have. The *Mohawk Queen* barge was run into an' sunk in the Erie Basin last fall. If he come from her he'd been swimmin' a long time when we picked him up," said Cap'n Jun.

"Been refuted, perhaps?" suggested Benjie.

"She wasn't worth it. She's over there at a shipyard being broken up. I know it for a fact, Benjie."

The two men looked at each other, with the solemn notes of the alarm-bell ringing in their ears.

"Jumpin' Jehoshaphat!" exclaimed Benjie, at last. "He didn't have no striped suit on. We ain't got to know where he come from, Lannigan."

"Humph!"

"If he'd jumped off that wall yonder, how would he have had time to git rid of the uniform they put 'em into over there?"

"Loney says his underclo'es is cut up as though he'd slit down his outside clo'es with a knife. But where'd th' likes of him git a knife?"

"Search me! But they're sharp—sometimes."

"Knives?"

"Aw, chuck it, Lannigan!" exclaimed the mate. "I'd not want to send one of them back, anyway."

"And I don't want to be gettin' th' *Mary Ellen* into trouble."

"Pshaw!"

"Ye kin say it twice—and a couple of fudges!"

Benjie merely granted, and made no further comment.

"Well, I'm going down to have a look at the under clo's—Mebbe they're marked."

Lannigan tramped down the ladder to the lower deck of the *Mary Ellen*. When he stuck his head into the engine room, which was likewise the boiler-room, he saw a smooth-faced man in mud garments, stoking the furnace manfully, while Peter Marley, the engineer, calmly smoked his pipe.

"What's this?" demanded Lannigan gruffly.

"'Tis out o' gratitudoon he's workin'," declared Peter, waving the stem of his pipe at the perspiring stoker. "He come in here just now and took the shovel out o' me hands."

"Gratitudo!" grunted Lannigan. "What for? What's he grateful ter yease for, Peto? Ye had nothin' ter do wit' aavin' him."

"Well, he thanks I had," returned the calm engineer.

"Gee!" exclaimed the captain. "You'd be applyin' for a Carnegie medal—be?"

"Hi!" exclaimed Peter, suddenly starting up. "See what ye're at, man!"

But it was done before he had finished speaking. In his vigorous work of looking the fire, the samsumbalist had broken the line stretched across the room, on which his own garments had been strung to dry, and his and clothes went with a swish into the mire of the furnace!

"Aisy!" exclaimed Peter. "Ye've lost yer clo's now. If Benjie demands he's a off'n ye, ye'll go home in a barrel."

"My goodness!" exclaimed the samsumbalist. "How careless of me!"

He looked boldly at Lannigan, who stood loweringly in the door.

"You're the captain, an't you?" asked the stranger.

"I am that."

"I want to thank you, then, for getting me aboard——"

"Ye kin stow it!" said Lannigan sharply. "Where'd ye want'er be landed?"

"Why—o's interitorial to me, sir."

"It's not to me," said Lannigan. "I have a choice. It's soon."

"Soon?"

"As soon as possible. I'd rather see th' back of ye than yer face—an' that's flat!"

"Er—it is rather abrupt," admitted the stranger. "But I'm grateful to you all just the same."

"Don't hurt yourself. As soon as we can see any-

thing through this slop we'll touch—and you kin skid-doo," said Lannigan. "You're too careless ter stay aboard the *Mary Ellen*—and we'll fergit you was ever here—see?"

"All right, old sport."

The captain went back to the pilot-box.

"You lose, Benjie," he said grudgingly.

"Lose what?"

"Looks to me like a pretty fair outfit—underclo's, half-worn boots, a good pilot-sheer, pants, and a cap. Got a pair of gloves to give him before he goes?"

"What?" gasped Benjie.

"He goes ashore as soon as we can work our way in."

"Come! give him time to change. He can wear his own farnels. Then I let him have cost me four dollars a suit."

"Ye always did have expensive tastes, Benjie. But you'll say da-da to 'em."

"Let him git into his own," cried Benjie.

"He'll have to go to the hot place to get 'em, then," grinned Lannigan, and he related the incident of the stranger's "carelessness."

"Them goods was marked, all right," Lannigan added. "He didn't want 'em seen."

"Seems ter me I'm stung on this deal," grumbled Benjie. "I risked me life ter save the bloke, and now he walks ashore with me goods an' chaffs, eh?"

"You'll be sendin' for a Carnegie medal, then?" suggested Lannigan, chuckling heartily.

"Jumpin' Jehosophat!" exclaimed the mate, in disgust. "You ketch me passin' another man out o' the drink! I won't even hear him yellin' next time."

CHAPTER VI.

ESCAPING TEN THOUSAND EYES.

The fog was still thick, and it was growing dark as well, when the *Mary Ellen* blundered into a Harlem dock and a figure sprang ashore—quite unnoticed. The *Mary Ellen* backed out again and parted from the passenger without a moment's regret on the part of any one aboard, saving Benjie. Later Lannigan regretted—when he cast about into the innards made on the contents of the big fat bottle in his cupboard.

But the samsumbalist was not the man to worry over a suit of borrowed clothes, or the trouble which he might have caused the crew of the *Mary Ellen*—if any inquiry was made for him aboard her.

He had his own personal safety to think of. By a miracle he had escaped with his life. The knife, which he had stolen from another convict, and had secreted about his person most carefully, had helped him get rid of the striped suit—the mark of his servitude in the penitentiary.

Had he been picked up in a suit, not even the good-natured Benjie Holler, or Lamigan, could have let him go again in freedom. They could not have closed their eyes to the prison costume.

He had made way with the marked underclothing, too, and therefore the *Mary Ellen's* crew could save their consciences by declaring that they saw nothing about the man that proved his identity as a convict.

Fortunately, No. 27042 had been shaved that very morning by the prison barber; but his turn to have a hair-cut would not come for a week. And the natural curling of his hair when it was wet helped his disguise. The rough clothing of the riverman was a godsend to the fugitive.

But the man left the Harlem dock with precipitation. He wasn't waiting to be interviewed by even an idle loiterer. He knew that before this the news of his escape had been phoned to the New York police, and when the evening platoon went on duty, his description and record would be read out to the "bells," and within the limits of Greater New York at least ten thousand eyes would be sharply open for him.

Just for him—ten thousand eyes peering into the faces of every passing stranger, for he who had been No. 27042 at Sing Sing—otherwise "Sleaz Jemmy" Raddigan, sneak thief, confidence man, bank-cracker, and—latest of all—the Sound pirate that had stirred up the wealthy residents of the northern shore of Long Island, and had been captured by that sharp police special, Bowery Billy.

Raddigan, at another time, would have been proud of his achievements. Just now he wished he was not so well known to the police, or even so admired among people of his own class.

For, first of all, is the Under World treachery is feared. To save himself from punishment for a small crime, a crook is frequently tempted to "mitch" on a brother who has committed a greater. This is caused by the police system of the "third degree," and of their practice of depending upon the crooks themselves to tell them which of their number has committed a given crime.

"Honor among thieves" is a term applied in sarcasm only. Fear of personal consequences sometimes keeps a thief from peaching on a partner when he is caught himself, but a man who will steal and live by his wits, making his fellow-man suffer thereby, has usually no regard for the truth, and lacks both honor and loyalty.

Raddigan feared to be spotted by other crooks as much as he feared to be held up by some rubbering copper. As he shuffled away from the dock and hit the street beyond, he pulled the cap down over his eyes, "munched" his shoulders up to his ears, suddenly acquired a slight limp to his left leg, and so changed his appearance and manner that, had Benjie Holler met him five minutes after he disembarked from the *Mary Ellen*, the tug's mate could only have recognized him by the clothing he wore.

And Raddigan determined to make such recognition as that impossible soon. He did not believe that the crew of the tug would keep their mouths closed regarding him. They would be putting the bulls and fly-cops on his track in an hour or two. And Benjie Holler's second hand clothing would identify the escaped convict as well as a striped suit!

So Raddigan got aboard a down town bound horse car after a time of skulking along the water side streets, and so arrived in the neighborhood of poor shops along lower Tenth and Eleventh avenues.

In and out of these he went, leaving an article here and another there, always exchanging for something worse, but for some garment entirely different from that which Benjie had given him.

The fellow meant to make a desperate attempt to remain free. Coming back to New York seemed a foolish proposition, perhaps; but the city has a thousand hiding-places for such as he, where the country might have none.

Besides, Raddigan was penniless, and in the country a beggar is a marked man. The police could track him from house to house as he begged his food.

Oh, no; New York was by far the better place for him. But so desperate did he consider his case that he exchanged even Benjie Holler's suit of good flannels for thinner and cheaper under-garments—but he got a few pennies to boot from the Jew there. And it would be warm weather before long, anyway.

To the ordinary run of crooks, when leaving jail, either by escape, or because their time has run out, the first move is to reach some hangout in the slums of the city, where he may meet a friend. But Raddigan feared to do this. He had just begun a stretch of twenty years, and the full horror of such a period behind bars had gotten a grip on his feelings that he could not shake off. He was determined to run no slight risk, even, of being recognized.

And then—he had a goal in view. There was a person in the city whom he was determined to see. That person would help him—could be made to, whether willingly or no. Raddigan was sure of that.

He had beaten his way down-town on the horse car by getting aboard with a bunch of workmen, and had even jockeyed the conductor out of a transfer. Now he walked to Twenty-eighth street, and got aboard another horse-car going east.

There was a policeman following him aboard the car. Raddigan experienced a strange tightening feeling of the muscles about the heart, and his lower jaw set, too.

The man had come to the determination not to be captured alive. Had the officer accosted him he would have flown at his throat.

But the crook grew calmer when the officer left at Seventh avenue without noticing him. He sat hunched up in his seat, and although he watched everybody sharply,

did not appear to be half awake to his fellow-passengers—or to those who paid him any attention.

The car ran through to Broadway, indeed, without any incident out of the ordinary happening. Raddigan looked out on the lights and bustle with half stifled sighs of satisfaction. This was life! This was not stagnation such as he had been subjected to back there in that frowning fortress on the Hudson.

The horse-car stopped as in duty bound on the west side of the more important thoroughfare. No passengers alighting, the conductor pulled the bell, without looking forward to see if any Broadway car was passing at the moment.

The driver saw, however, that a car from up-town and one from down had both halted at the corner, and their signals to "go ahead" sounded at the same moment.

The driver knew enough not to start, for the heavy electric had the right of way. But his horses—a young and vigorous pair of animals—heard the signal for going ahead as well as he did.

They leaped forward. The car, although tightly braked, jerked a bit, and a man standing on the front platform was hurled against the driver's elbow.

The driver had released the brake-pin with his foot, but held it tight with the strength of his arm. But this violent collision made him lose his hold on the brake-handle. It spun rapidly, catching him in the short ribs, and knocking him breathless to the rear of the platform.

Feeling the car released—and almost within the second of the signal to start—the horses leaped forward again. The driver had completely lost control of them.

The motorman of the electric coming down-town saw the accident in time, and ground his own car to a halt. But the car from down-town had disembarked no passengers at this corner, and had merely slowed down for the crossing, its conductor ringing twice instantly.

This motorman was not so cool or old a hand as the other. And he caught a very confused view of the accident over the heads of the struggling horses. He did not brake quick enough.

The horse-car was half-way across Broadway, the horses just clearing the bumper of the car from down town, when the collision of the two occurred.

The great weight of the electric driven against the smaller and lighter horse-car, flung it from the track, bore the horses to the ground, and, the next instant, the lighter car being wedged between the two electric, there was a smashing of glass and shattering of woodwork that could be heard half a dozen blocks along Broadway!

The passengers in the horse-car were caught in a trap, and were unable to escape, as the broken glass rained about them, and the monstrous jerks of the wreck tossed them about like peas in a collander!

And just at this remarkable juncture, our old friend Bowery Billy, otherwise William Barlow, comes into the story!

Billy had been riding up-town on the Broadway line. Why he had been riding in that direction at half-past eight in the evening does not matter particularly, only, as he was dressed in garments much different from those he sported on his native heath—otherwise the Bowery—it can be safely asserted that a call upon "a peach" might have been his object.

However, he got no farther—not in those clothes—at that night.

The car chanced to be packed, and was behind schedule, owing to a block at Murray street. Billy had been pushed out on the platform with several others as the crowd came in from the rear. Under no other circumstances are passengers allowed to ride on the front platforms of New York electric.

And to show that the rule is pretty closely enforced, when the electric hit the horse-car, Billy left the front platform with a great deal of precipitation!

He dived over the dashboard, for the great car struck the lighter vehicle with sufficient force to make it rebound. But Billy kept on, went through the broken window of the horse-car, and landed head-first in the lap of a man who had been sitting on the other side of the horse-car, and had been thrown backward by the collision.

"Ouch!" yelled this fellow, his breath going out at the impact.

There was a wild tumult about him, but Billy never forgot his manners. He bobbed up with a grin.

"Pardon me, 'Alphonse!' he panted. "I didn't go for ter come in so abrupt. Be yer hot, cuh?"

"Ugh!" ejaculated the man.

"Same here! We belongs ter de same order."

"Git out!" commanded the fellow ugly.

Everybody was scrambling out of the half-overturned horse-car. One choleric old gentleman was threatening loudly to sue everybody, from the president of the company that manufactured the glass that had cut his nose, to the man who cleaned the harnesses in the car-barn. There was a crowd of two thousand around the corner, and a dozen cops were already fighting their way to the middle of the drug, and, in the distance, sounded the clang of an ambulance gong, sent for by some officious person, although nobody had been seriously injured.

Billy was amused, now that he had gotten his breath, by the anger of the man he had bruted.

"Git out!" commanded that individual again.

"After youse, me dear Gaston!" returned Billy, who saw that it was next to impossible to climb out of the car by the way he had come in.

The lights in the car had been smashed, and the oil was running all over everything. But fortunately it did not catch afire. Billy couldn't see the man very well, but he beheld him groping about the floor frantically.

"What you lost, cull? yer transfer?"

"Git out!" growled the man, a third time.

"Free times an' out!" cried Billy. "Here we go!"

A crowd of cops just then broke into the wedged car and began to haul out the remaining passengers—a good deal as though they were bundles of straw.

"What's yer name? Where d'ye live?" were their demands upon each "rescued" unfortunate.

The man Billy had collided with had found what he was searching for now. It was his cap, and he planted it on his rather closely-cropped hair, and yanked it down over his eyes closely.

"Name!" howled a fresh-faced young cop in his ear.

"Er—Smith!" declared the passenger.

"Huh?" muttered the cop. "Most all belong to the same family. Every man I've asked says the same. John, I suppose!"

"Yep," returned the other unflinchingly.

"Where d'ye live?"

"845 East Eighty-third street," said the man glibly.

"In de middle of de East River," chuckled Billy.

But the cop put it down gravely, and the man, having no bruises excepting those administered by Billy when he struck him, departed humbly. The cop grabbed Billy.

"Here, kid! what's your name?" he demanded. "Don't you tell me it's Smith, or I'll hand you one. I've squeezed that lemon till it's bone-dry."

"All right, cull! I'm Prince Henry of Roostingbag, in disgrace; an' I'm staying at the Waldorf-Astoria."

The cop grinned.

"Hotel, or stables?" he inquired.

"Yer all right, Percy!" declared Bowery Billy. "You'll find me down ter Bayard street an' de Bowery at me stand—an' if ever yer wants a good shine—a ten center for a nickel, an' wit'out no roosum in it—dat's de place fer youse ter come to."

"Oh, you're Bowery Billy, are you?" said the copper. "Well, you can fade away!"

"Tanks. And," added Billy to himself as he struck the sidewalk and could see his clothing in the light of the store-signs, "de quicker I fade outer good society de better!"

Suddenly he started at a touch upon his shoulder. He glanced sideways and up, and saw a gentleman standing by his side who seemed, at that moment, to be interested only in the crowd still lingering about the overturned car, and to have no eyes at all for Billy.

But Billy knew that touch had been meant for him, for he recognized George Myrick. He waited, and when

Mr. Myrick carelessly walked away, the Bowery boy followed.

Ten minutes later they were in a corner of the Hoffman House café—Billy seeking the darkest nook because of the confusion of his apparel.

"Railroad wreck victim, eh, Billy?" suggested the detective, smiling.

"I feel it. Chisel w'en I made dat high an' lofty tumble enter de guy's lap—where?"

"Going to sue the company?"

"Nops."

"Nothing to say against our traffic system?"

"Nix fer de awful chokes! Wof's de use er knockin' dat moseman was doin' his best ter get de belated thates folks ter deir shows, an' so was de conduc. If dat guy don't sue me, I won't sue de comp'ny."

"By the way, Billy—"

Billy began to grin. "Yer comin' to be p'int now, Mr. Myrick. I knowed yer didn't ask me in here fer nottin'."

Myrick smiled good-naturedly.

"Well, I had a bit of news for you."

"All right. Somebody died an' left me er million—Royal Eidwell, fer instance?"

George Myrick's brow contracted, as it always did when he was reminded of the multi-millionaire, who had exercised his influence to have both Myrick and Billy dropped from the force. At the time Myrick had said:

"That's only the forerunner, my son. The time is comin' when George Myrick will be out for good."

But now he made no comment on Billy's remark, saying only:

"Haven't you heard the news, then?"

"Nix. Dere's nottin' doin' in crime—'ceptin' de dagoes is gettin' more ruzum in deir blackin'. I'm goin' ter write Wilky about it—de guy wot's ruzum de pure food law dey're talkin' so much about. He daughter do somet'in' ter dem wops."

"You're sore on the Italians, Billy."

"I am after me scrap wit' dat Pietro Coribaldi Max cap'n—an' he on'y gits sixty days. Chose?"

"You'd have liked to have him get a stretch like Raddigan, eh?" asked Myrick, with a sly smile.

"Butcher sweet life! An' he deserved it."

"Then he might have done what Raddigan's done."

"Huh?"

"He's skipped."

"Who's skipped?" demanded Billy.

"Silent Jenny. Weed came down this evening just before I left headquarters. He straked in the fog."

"Green bananas?"

"They think he must have had assistance. But they always do say that when there's a break. He got clean away, that's sure."

'Great tumble-shoots!'

"Nothing else to say?"

But Billy was staring straight ahead, and his face actually paled with the intensity of his emotion.

"What's the matter, Billy?" demanded Myrick.

"Say! I've had a pipe-dream! Dis is too good ter be true."

"Well, Billy, I didn't think you'd say that about Silent Jimmy Raddigan's escape—after all the trouble he's given us, too."

"I ain't. But dere's luck come straight to us."

"How?"

"Saw! I told yome how I did de long-distance dive ter de car-winder inter a feller's corporation?"

"You told me of your acrobatic performance—yes."

"Well, dat's him!"

"Him?"

"Yup. I knowed I'd seed his face before. But dough dey've got him bof smooth an' wif goat fringe down ter de gallery, I ain't been useter seem' him scalped——"

"What are you talking about, Billy?" demanded Myrick, with impatience.

"Raddigan."

"Not Silent Jimmy? You don't mean——"

"Sure I mean it! Dat was him."

"Billy, you're twisted."

"I shouldn't wonder," returned the boy, grinning. "I's like de hod-carrier wot got his overalls on handside before an' den fell from de roof. Maybe dere's no bones broke, but I've got de doctors of er twist on me! An' dat feller's got a pain in his tummy, too, I bet! I dived inter him like er rocket."

"And you believe it was Raddigan?"

"Dat's wot, Mr. Myrick! I been punding me nut about w'ere I'd seen him before. Dat was him."

"Too good to be true, Billy."

"Den I'll find out if it's so, all right, all right!"

"How? Look up some of de tough joints he used to hang about!"

"No, sir."

"Nobody's seen Silly Andy, I suppose?"

"Not dat I hears tell on."

"Then what, Billy?"

"Dere's jost one person dat Raddigan might go to fer help if he lands here strapped, an' in danger of being nabbed by de cops. An' I'm goin' ter feller out dat

idea. Good night, Mr. Myrick! I'll see yome ter morrow—or report."

"See here, Billy! Going to keep this to yourself?" laughed George Myrick.

"Dis is me own private lay, Mr. Myrick. Raddigan gits on me nerves. Yome don't waster butt in, do yome?"

"All right, Billy. But you're a boy, and he's a man—and a bad one."

"I've barked against him before, sir," said Billy seriously. "It was me sent him up. An' I'll git him now."

"Have a care, Billy!"

Billy grinned. "I'll have two cares, sir! One is fer me own skin, an' de odder is dat Rad gits behind de bars ag'in in short order. Yome kin bet yer small change on dat!"

"'Pride goeth before a fall,' Billy."

"Dis ain't no pride, sir. I knowas dat it ain't safe fer Bow'ry Billy if Raddigan is loose. He's got it in for me, an' he's de kind of a feller dat woud risk de chair ter get bunks wif' yer. Him an' me can't take er bat' in de same ocean—like de Jew said wot got mad wif' his partner. Ev'rytime we meets we look horns. An' dis time, sir, Raddigan's plays' fer a big stake—his freedom!"

CHAPTER VIII.

A LITTLE GOSSIP.

Now is a good time to tell where Billy was bound when he met with his accident. There was a box-party at a Broadway theater that evening, given by Billy's chum, Phil Erwin, and "the peach" was to be there.

"The peach" in this case was Miss Edith Smalls, and she had insisted upon attending with Madam Perrota as chaperon, although the latter did not like Phil, and had no use at all for Billy.

The other members of the party were Professor Hardross, of Columbia University, and his daughter, Miss Beale.

Billy was late, anyway, and when he saw the state in which his garments were after the car collision, he had decided upon cutting the party altogether.

He disliked Madam Perrota so much, and doubted her honesty so seriously, that it made him uncomfortable to be in her company. The professor was a terrible bore. And as for the Broadway production—well, Billy wasn't stuck on Broadway shows.

"Giv' me de kind dey c'rous inter youse on Tird an' noo," said Billy. "Dere's sumpin' doin' in dem shows. W'y de heroine has ter be an all-round acrobat an' a high an' luffy tumbler ter do de stunts she's billed ter do. An' de hero oughter be de Qualified Man ter make good—nottin' less dan a stone image'd stand fer de manlin' he takes. An' de villain wears er steel harness in de last act, an' gets struck by lightnin'—an' if he don't stand jest so dey won't be no reason fer sendin' him ter de electric-chair, fer he'll git his right on de styge—yes, sir!"

"An' den dere's a hurycane, an' de styge settin' blows ter pieces, an' er canvas tree falls down an' holds de faithful servant so't he dies er lingerin' deat' right in view of de audience. An' de old man wot's killed fer his mamma in de foist act, and comes on as a crank nigger in all de odders, he moistered so natural dat youse kin see de blood run down de stage—he aquirs it out of a rubber ball as he lays dere, dey tells me.

"An' w'en dey starts de sawmill in de t'ird act, an' de hero is tied on de table, if de heroine happens ter miss de cue, 'r falls down an' boits herself before she reaches him, de blame 't'ing would keep right on an' saw de feller up inter two be fours—dat's no joke! He carries ten 'tousand' dollars life-insurance, dey says, an' is secret ter deat' fer fear de go'll git er grouch on him some time.

"I tell youse, Phdly! dat's de kind of er show ter see. Nottin' like it ever happens ter us folks wot's settin' it; but we kin all dope out t'ings jest like it—if we're was only heroes and heroesses ourselves. De Broadway shows make me weary!"

With this registered opinion of highbrow productions, even the presence of Edie Smalls could not attract Billy much. Now, however, on leaving the Hoffman House, he crossed to the park, picked up a cabman whom he knew well, and had himself driven as rapidly as possible to his lodgings, where he changed into decent garments, and rood up town again to the theater where Phil Erwin's box party was booked.

It was the beginning of the last act when he appeared, and he had to tell about his accident—which he related in so humorous a vein that everybody but Madam Perroza and the professor was convulsed with laughter.

The madam sat with grimly set lips, and wouldn't have smiled at Billy for a farm down east, with a pig on it! She considered him vulgar beyond expression.

As for the professor, he never could understand Max-

fer Barlow's language, and he gave it up as beyond even his powers of logic. He would tackle the unknown tongue of a man from an unknown town, but the language of the Bowery boy was beyond him!

"And besides all dis," concluded Bowery Billy, loudly enough to be sure that the madam heard him, "I had a delay over another matter. One o' me friends is loose."

"Loose?" repeated Miss Bessie. "What does that mean?"

"I can guess," laughed Edie. "Billy considers 'cain' mals that he has helped send to jail his friends. Isn't that so, Billy?"

"Well, dey ain't me friends w'ile dey is out o' jail," declared Billy, with a grin.

"Who is it?" asked Phil, with interest.

"One of de best—'r de worst, whichever way yer comes ter look at it."

"Who?"

"He give us enough trouble dat time we was down ter Far Reaches wit' Soloway," said Billy.

"My goodness! not that pirate?" cried Edie.

"Silent Jeremy Raddigan?" exclaimed Phil.

Billy was looking at Madam Perroza covertly. He saw the lady start, put her handkerchief to her lips, and suddenly burst out laughing. Her eyes were fixed on the stage.

"Sh!" whispered Bessie Hardress. "Why do you come to the play if you won't listen?"

"I declare! I didn't hear anything to laugh at," murmured Edie.

In fact, when the young folks turned their attention to the performance, it seemed to be rather a solemn moment in the action of the piece.

Billy grinned maliciously, and at the next opening, said:

"Yep! Raddigan's got erway. Dis morning, I believe. And dey says he's come dis way."

"He'll be captured, of course."

"Dat ain't always sure. Dere's always a chance—Well, he's a hard one ter do. And if he's got somebody ter help him—"

"You don't seem much worried, Billy," said Phil.

"Tain't none o' my funeral. I got him onet, an' I'll git him ergin if he toins er trick here—'r else Mr. Myrick will."

"Put on your wraps, young ladies," whispered Madam Perroza. "The curtain will soon go down. I do not

see why you come to the play at all. You pay no attention to it."

Billy got Miss Edie's car.

"Is de Cap at home?"

"No, uncle has not come in yet. The Laughton has gone to Belfast, Maine, for lumber."

"Cheer! I wanter go home wif' youse, Miss Edie."

"Well, I declare, Billy! This is so sudden!"

"Qut kiddin'. It's serious."

"Why—"

"Come, Edith! the carriage will be waiting," snapped Madam Perrota, at the box-door.

"Very well. Billy is going with us," said the young girl calmly. "There is a book of uncle's that he wants. He might as well get it to-night, and save him a trip to the house especially for it."

"Dat wouldn't be no trouble, Miss Edie," declared Billy, grinning, and tickled the girl had caught on so easily.

Phil was going out with Benjie and the professor. They lived in the "Elgin," where he lived himself.

Madam Perrota darted an angry glance at the Bowery boy, hit her lip, and stalked on ahead.

"I shall have to pay for this to-morrow, Master Billy," whispered Edith, looking at him reproachfully.

"Wat'll she do—beat yer?" demanded Billy seriously.

"How horrid of you! No, she isn't half as bad as you believe her."

"And she's er good deal worse den you think she is," observed Billy, under his breath, and shaking his head as he followed on behind to the Smalls' carriage.

CHAPTER IX.

THE TROUBLE NEXT DOOR.

The social atmosphere in the Smalls' carriage could have been cut into chunks with an axe and sold to the Ice Trust. Madam Perrota refused to speak to either Edie or Billy, and the latter appeared to be vastly browbeaten.

He spoke in a hoarse whisper to the amused young girl, just before the carriage reached the Madison avenue mansion.

"Say! he looked natchural, didn't he?"

"What's that?" she cried.

"An' I never seen more beautiful flowers," murmured Billy, shaking his head.

"You ridiculous boy!" gasped Edie. "What do you mean?"

"Ain't we been ter a funeral?" demanded Billy admonishingly.

Edie giggled most vulgarly—according to Madam Perrota—and pinched Billy's arm.

"Do believe!" she whispered.

So that was Billy's only contribution to the continuity of the evening's enjoyment! On reaching the house Madam Perrota left the carriage with her nose in the air—as though she sniffed something offensive—and marched up the steps to the door, which Jeanne held open.

But Billy, stalking on behind, much in her gait, to Edie's uncontrollable amusement, caught the lady glancing sharply about the dark and almost deserted street, as though she half-feared to see somebody skulking near the house.

Billy watched, too, to see if the footman gave her any message, or a card, but the lady swept by the staff and stretched Jeanne, and mounted to her own rooms.

"Now, what is all this for?" demanded Edie, drawing Billy inside.

"Why, I want dat book youse spoke of," said Billy, in perfect innocence.

"But, why—"

"Now, Miss Edie, I don't wanter string youse," declared Billy, in haste. "An' I can't tell youse de truth now. Besides, dat old cat is watchin' an' listamin' up-stairs dere."

"Why, I heard her door slam!" exclaimed Edie.

"Run up-stairs, an' you'll catch her," grinned Billy.

"I will, sir!" murmured Edie. Then, aloud: "Wait a moment, Billy, till I give Marie my furs, and I'll go down to the captain's cabin with you."

She ran rapidly up the stairs, and was gone two minutes. When she returned she looked serious enough.

"Well?" demanded Edie.

"How did you know?"

"Know wat?"

"Knew that she would spy on us?"

"Well, dat's tellin', too!"

"I'm astonished at Madam Perrota, Billy!"

"I'm astonished at her meself," returned Billy gravely.

"I didn't think she'd let herself get boshed so easy."

"You are incorrigible, Billy."

"Dat's er hard name for youse ter call me, Miss Edie. I hate ter have youse call me one o' dem tings."

"What tings?"

"Dem—dem insect—Well, wot youse said."

At this the girl went off into a muffled peal of laughter.

"Oh, Billy! what did you suppose I meant?"

"Well, it sounds like I was one o' dese here animals yer sees pictures of—dat happened before de flood, yer know. Dat woid sounds ter me like it meant er ting wit' er long, saw-tooth tail, an' er shell ruff—like er tolike's—on his back—ugh!"

"Billy! you know better! Come down into de cabin and let me give you a book, then."

"Dat's wot I'm waitin' for, Miss Edie."

"I have a good mind to give you the biggest dictionary in de house, and make you carry it home, Billy!" she whispered, as they descended to the room Captain Ben Small called his "cabin."

This room was half-way down the rear stairway, and was built out over the garden. Edie had scarcely snapped on the electric light, and turned to the bookcase in which Cap'n Ben kept a small, but chosen, collection of seaparas and navigation books, when both young people were startled by a shrill shriek.

"Why! what's that?" gasped Edie.

"Sounds like somebody'd gone off deir nancy," grunted Billy, standing in a listening attitude, and with tense muscles ready to spring back up the stairway.

"Is it one of de inside?"

Again the cry rang out. It did not sound like a woman's voice, yet Billy exclaimed:

"Is dat Madam Perceps?"

"No, no! That's never her voice, Billy."

"Sure got!"

"Of course not! And it's outside de house, anyway."

"It's next door!" declared Bowery Billy, locating the sound at last.

Following his words there sounded a crash of window glass, another scream, and then a voice shrieked in the outer air:

"Murder! Help! Police!"

Billy turned out the light and in two leaps reached the window of the cabin, which looked out upon the neighboring yard. He tore aside the drapery, snapped up the shade, unlocked the sash, and flung it up, all in a few seconds. Edie cowered behind him, frightened, but curious.

"Wot's de matter?" yelled the Bowery boy, with his head out of the window. "Who's creakin'?"

"Help! help!" shrieked the shrill voice at a window above, and in the next house.

"Yer don't want no help yellin', if dat's wot youse mean," said Billy, in disgust. "Youse could raise de sleepers on er railroad! Break off! Let's hear wot de trouble is, anyway!"

Meanwhile, his keen gaze swept the two yards—the Small's and the one belonging to the house in which the man was screaming at the window—or as much of them as he could see for the darkness.

"Police! I've been robbed!" cried the man frantically.

"Is dat all? Phaw! I tought dere was anudder mayor elected. Fergit it! Go 'round to de station in de mornin' an' tell yer troubles to de sarge," advised Billy, and he drew in his head again, and closed the window with a bang.

"Why, Billy?" exclaimed Edith.

"Huh?"

"How heartless of you. That was Mr. DeLisle."

"Is dat so? I wouldn't ha' knowed him fröm de Farago station."

"But I never knew you to be so little interested in a robbery, Billy."

"No?"

"Why, it's right in your line."

"Youse don't say?" exclaimed Billy, smiling broadly. "Now, Miss Edie, don't youse tell anybody dat I ain't interested in de burglary. Day might t'ink if I said I wasn't interested, dat I was."

"Who'd think so, Billy Barlow?" demanded Edith, much puzzled.

"Aw, green bananas! ain't youse de one fer askin' questions? Don't you—say! could a man crawl up de side of de shanty?"

"What?" queried Edith, in surprise.

"Of de room—de ell—de outside of it, I mean?"

"Oh! there's a ladder for a view—yes."

"Is dat so? And who's over us?"

"What do you mean? Who sleeps over us?"

"Yep."

"Nobody. It's Madam Perceps's sitting-room up there—on de second floor, you know."

"Is dat so? Well, yer Mr. DeLisle ain't yelpin' no more. Guess de police has come, 'f else he's found he ain't lost nothin' after all."

There was some stir in the Smalls house, now. Jeames came to the door of the clinic, and said:

"Madam Perroux's compliments, miss, and she asks what is the matter?"

"I have no idea, excepting that Mr. DeLisle shouted out the window that he had been robbed," returned Edith. "It seems to have been a false alarm, however. I hear nothing further."

Jeames stalked away with this reply. Edith selected a book almost at random, and thrust it into Billy's hand.

"I don't understand you at all, Billy Barlow!" she declared, in much vexation. "You're always trying to mystify your friends."

"Aw, cripes, Miss Edie! don't youse git mad."

"I am—I could bite! You're fooling me."

"Not me!"

"Yes you are. There's something about that burglary, and something about your coming here, that you won't explain—and they're both of a piece. Now you can go along with your old book!"

While she had been speaking so, she had led Billy above-stairs, and to the front door.

"Aw, now! don't youse go for to get mad, Miss Edie," begged Billy again.

"I don't think I'm going to like you any more, Bowery Billy," she declared sternly. "Not unless you tell me what it all means."

At that Billy began to grin again.

"Will yer be friends ergin, Edie, if I talls yer all I know meself?"

"Honor bright?"

"Cross your heart?"

"All right, Billy. What is it all about?" cried the eager girl.

"Well, jest as soon as I find out meself, I'll tell youse!" declared Billy, with a chuckle, and he ran out, and disappeared, with the book under his arm.

CHAPTER X.

THE HUMAN MAGNIE.

"I shall certainly explain to Mr. Husbroucke, Edith, that it will be impossible for me to maintain any oversight over you, or to introduce you into the select circles in which I am received, when you 'come out' if you are determined to give your interest and companionship to such low characters as that Bowery boy."

This came from the stately Madam Perroux the next morning at the late breakfast which was always served when the ladies were alone in Edith's small sitting-room.

Madam Perroux looked as though she had not slept well. No refinement of costume or art of the cosmetic brush and powder could hide that fact.

"The disturbance made about this house last night was disgusting——"

"Why, madam?" exclaimed Edith, much amused, "Billy had nothing to do with that. It was Mr. DeLisle next door. And he is a particular friend of yours, you know, and comes of one of the oldest families!"

"I heard that low person's voice out of the window, bandying words with somebody."

"Oh, fit, madam! that was Mr. DeLisle himself. Bandying words! how could you?"

"It was the tone of that Bowery boy's voice I heard. I shall go to call on Mr. DeLisle at once, and ask his pardon for the disgraceful language used in his hearing by your guest."

"Oh, gee!" murmured Edith, with dancing eyes, and quoting Billy in a favorite expression.

"You are positively low, miss!" snapped the madam, and the rose and sailed out of the room, leaving her breakfast scarcely tasted.

She must have been very earnest in her desire to placate Mr. DeLisle, for Edith heard her order Jeames, the footman, to go next door and ring, and ask Mr. DeLisle if he would receive her at once.

Mr. Roman DeLisle was a man somewhat past middle age, with a lot of money, and a lot of room where his brains might have been, had Nature not been exceedingly stingy in his making!

He wasn't dissipated, and he did not talk with a flap, and he was not a club-man, or a rounder. But he spent his time in gathering about him perfectly useless, though valuable, antiques, coins, vases, precious stones, and what-not.

Mr. DeLisle was very aristocratic. Madam Perroux was forever telling Edith that he was quite the nicest man—came of the oldest family—living on the block.

The madam had cultivated the acquaintance of Mr. Roman DeLisle assiduously, and he thought her a very fine woman indeed.

Jeames brought back word that Mr. DeLisle would be charmed—"chawmed" was the way he said it—to be visited by Madam Perroux, although his nerves were

quite unstrung from the adventure of the previous night. James reported that just what the adventure had been even Mr. DeLisle's servants did not seem to know. The police had not been called in, of that James, standing at the door of Madam Perroon's apartment, said he was very sure.

"Very well, James. I will go over at once. And, James?"

"Yes, madam!"

"Ask Marie to bring a pot of tea and some cakes to my sitting-room for Mrs. Manning. She will remain here until I return."

James had caught sight of an elderly figure—a lady in severely plain black, and a cap, and gray curls—sitting by the nearest window.

"An old dependent of mine, James," said the madam pleasantly, as she sweeps down the stair-flight, and left the house.

"Humph!" muttered the footman, following in search of the maid, Marie. "I wonder who let the old party in? She must have come callin' early."

Madam Perroon was ushered next door into what Mr. DeLisle called his morning room. It was, in fact, an amateur museum, packed with his curios. Out of one of its rear windows he was yelling at the top of his voice the night before, when Bowery Billy had shouted to him.

"My dear Madam Perroon!" exclaimed Mr. DeLisle, rising to meet her. "This is indeed kind of you."

"I felt it my duty to call at once—as early as possible," declared the lady, accepting the chair he offered her.

"Why? Although I should not question the goods the gods send," declared Mr. DeLisle, with gallantry.

"After last night, I mean."

"Oh, madam! did I disturb you?"

"Why, I could not fail to be disturbed if you were in danger, Mr. DeLisle," declared the madam.

"You are too kind. But, really, it was an exciting experience."

"Tell me—what was it?"

"And you surely heard me shouting?"

"I heard a young man whom that dreadful and impossible Captain Smalls brings to the house, calling out the window to you in a most impudent way. That is what has brought me here, Mr. DeLisle. I must beg you to overlook the foolishness of the boy."

"Really, I did not notice, dearer know!" declared Mr. DeLisle. "I was too excited."

"You must have been—and to be robbed——"

"Well, now! Isn't that strange? I wasn't robbed at all."

"But you said you were—at least, so I understood."

"I thought I was, Madam Perroon. Really, I was terribly excited. Let me tell you," said the collector, rubbing his hands.

"Do, pray!"

"You know my collection of antique gems, Madam Perroon?"

"You have honored me with a glimpse of them—yes."

"Madam! all my treasures are at your disposal—to examine," added Mr. Roman DeLisle, as an afterthought.

"You are too good," murmured the visitor.

"Well! it was so remarkable. I was sitting at yonder table, where the light from the chandelier is best, examining a tray of the costliest and most magnificent jewels in my collection—they are all in that cabinet, you know, madam. Suddenly, I looked up, and there, with his face pressed close to yonder window-pane, was a man!"

"My dear Mr. DeLisle?"

"A fact, I assure you."

"But quite impossible."

"Madam!"

"This room is on the second floor, my dear sir," said Madam Perroon, with assurance.

"And that proves?"

"That I am right. It could not be. It was an hallucination."

Mr. DeLisle grew a little warm, yet he remembered that his antagonist was a lady.

"I assure you, Madam Perroon, I saw the man!"

"But——"

"No but about it, madam. He was there—staring in at me as I examined the gems."

"But was he winged? Did he stand in the air? How could he be there in such a position? Did he have a ladder?"

"I don't know what he had, madam. I only know that a man who shouldn't be there stared into the window at my gems. Really, I shan't feel safe again without a watchman in the back yard at night. I have already arranged for one to take his station there, beginning with to-night."

"It is a great mystery," sighed Madam Perroon.

DeLisle was delighted to see anybody as greatly interested in the matter as he was himself. He went out.

"I rose from my seat, madam, and thrust the tray back into the cabinet—so? I had presence of mind enough for that."

"Ah!"

"Before ever I screamed for my man, docher know, I did that."

"Remarkable!"

"And then, when I did scream, the man's face at the window disappeared—like that!" and he snapped his very white fingers.

"I recovered myself and ran to the window. In my excitement I presume I screamed that I was robbed, when, in truth, I was only about to be robbed."

"Exactly."

"Ha, ha! You appreciate it," cockled DeLisle. "Well, it was most astonishing. I couldn't see for the life of me where the fellow went. As you say, it seems improbable. Yet my brain is very clear, madam. I am not subject to nerves—oh, no! I never have hallucinations."

"Why," declared DeLisle warmly, rising and going to his cabinet, "I could see the fellow's glittering eyes following me when I came here and thrust the tray into its runners. He was a pale, or sallow, man, with a smooth, thin face. He had eyes like a hawk's—so keen."

"And no wonder they were covetous, Madam Perroza," and the gentleman cockled again. "I presume he had never seen such a fortune in gems before—and such gems! Why, I consider that there is ten thousand dollars represented in that one tray. See here!"

He jerked out the tray, which seemed to stick. He brought it to the table and placed it before Madam Perroza with a smile. He removed the sheet of silken silk which was supposed to cover the gems in question. Then—

He fell back, gasping. The madam stared up at him with her own face rapidly paling in the morning light, despite the rouge upon it.

The tray was empty—entirely empty!

CHAPTER XL

DISORIENTED FRIENDSHIP.

The discovery of the loss of the very jewels which he had been talking about left Mr. Roman DeLisle speechless for the moment. Madam Perroza's deep emotion must have been caused by some other feeling than sur-

prise. Her brows knit, and the blood rushed back into her cheeks, as though swept there by anger.

"The lying dog!" she muttered.

And this could not possibly have referred to poor Mr. DeLisle. He had told no intentional lie, that was sure.

"Oh, Madam Perroza!" he walked at last. "I have been robbed. They are gone! The very gems the accidental saw me looking at!"

"Most mysterious, Mr. DeLisle!" cried the madam, with her handkerchief at her lips.

"I—I— Why, they were worth ten thousand dollars in money, and a hundred thousand in reality, for they cannot be replaced in my collection."

Mr. DeLisle was all broken up, and paced the floor, wringing his delicate hands.

"Dear Mr. DeLisle!" exclaimed Madam Perroza. "Don't take it so to heart!"

"But, madam—after seeing the thief looking at them—to have allowed him the opportunity of getting them. It is awful!"

"Awfully careless," murmured the lady.

"What shall I do? Where's my man—but he's such a fool! There is no good at all in him—though he likes necktie superbly!"

"Not exactly the person fitted to cope with this emergency, I should say," remarked Madam Perroza drily.

"No, no! I must have somebody practical to advise me. The police must be seen—ah?"

Mr. DeLisle stood as though transfixed, with one long index finger on his brow.

"I have it!" he cried.

"You have an idea—really?" asked Madam Perroza, although the gentleman did not mark the irony.

"A gentleman was telling me yesterday that there really was one clever detective on the force. I will send for him."

"By all means, Mr. DeLisle."

"His name is Myrick—George Myrick. He can surely help me—if the gems are not gone forever."

Madam Perroza's expression changed again. But she pulled herself together, and arose.

"I wish I might help you, my dear friend!" she declared. "You—you are scarcely fit to cope with this matter."

"Ah, my dear madam! you are a true friend. I am not used to such difficulties. I'm such a rube, you know!"

"You will see the detective yourself?"

"I must. And—and—fancy! I have another idea, madam. We must keep this a secret between us until the detective tells us what to do. Really, I have heard that many mysteries are unraveled by the parties interested keeping the details to themselves. Even my servants do not know, of course, that I have been robbed. I explained to them all that I had lost nothing. Lost nothing!" wailed Mr. DeLisle again, "and my incomparable gems lost even then, perhaps."

"You have no idea when they could have been taken?" asked the madam; but it was a perfunctory query. Her mind was on something else.

"Why, after I had quieted down last night, of course. The bold scoundrel laid low until we were off our guard, and then came in that very window, I believe."

"But so far from the ground——"

"Ha!" cried DeLisle, showing that he had a third idea. "The roof of your ell."

"What do you mean?" asked Madam Perroza, startled.

"He might have reached the window from the roof of that room which was built onto your house, Madam Perroza."

"Oh, dear! and my windows are reached from that roof. You frighten me, sir!" gasped the madam, who turned pale again.

"Calm yourself, madam. Mr. Myrick shall be called, and the matter explained to him. Oh, but I dread the society—the disturbance——"

"You are overwrought yourself, Mr. DeLisle," declared Madam Perroza, more firmly. "You need calming more than I. Of course, this is a shock to me——"

"So kind of you to say so," murmured DeLisle, seating himself weakly.

"But let me prove my friendliness toward you by taking some of the unpleasant details off your hands, sir. I will communicate with this Myrick for you—you have no telephone in your house?"

"No. I had the beauty thing taken out. The bell was always ringing. Not that I am nervous, you understand——"

"Oh, I understand, quite! You will let me do this for you?"

"It will be too much trouble to you, madam."

"Not at all. We have a 'phone, you know."

"Could you really, now?"

"Instantly!" cried Madam Perroza, with alacrity.

"That is disinterested friendship, indeed! If you would be so kind."

"The man will be here this afternoon. I will have him come as soon as possible," declared Madam Perroza.

Mr. DeLisle bowed over her hand—indeed, he kissed it with old-fashioned gallantry.

"You burden me with obligations, madam!" he cried.

"Not at all," she said sweetly.

She hurried from the room. Her face changed, and the lines grew hard, while her eyes flashed dangerously as she scurried down the stairs, out of the house, and entered her own door.

As she mounted to her own rooms, where her "dependent, Mrs. Manning," was taking her cup of tea, Madam Perroza's face would have startled anybody who knew her. She was off her guard. The real woman looked out of her hard eyes, and the character she had so long kept hidden was graven around her stern mouth in lines which made that mouth look vicious!

CHAPTER XII.

IN HIDING.

Madam Perroza came into her sunny sitting-room and closed the door gently. The figure in black, with the cap and gray curls, did not turn from the contemplation of the back-yard, where a bevy of cats were sunning themselves on the fence.

Before this perfectly respectable-looking old person was a tray, and an empty tea-pot, and cup and saucer. There had been a plate of cakes, too, and as Madam Perroza waited an instant at the door—to recover her breath, perhaps, or her calmness—the hand of the old party, encased in black lace mitts, which displayed only the fingers, seized the last cake on the plate, and conveyed it to "Mrs. Manning's" mouth—where it was engulfed in one mouthful!

"Marie!" exclaimed Madam Perroza sharply.

"She ain't here, my dear," said the old person, in a high, cracked voice.

"Be still—yes!"

"Dear, dear," murmured the old lady, in much deeper tones. "You seem put out."

"And you will be put out in a moment. Off with you!" commanded Madam Perroza, striding across the room like a grenadier, and seizing the old woman by the shoulder.

"Loch, deary! how rough you be!" cackled the old creature.

"Sleep this fooling, or, by Heaven, I'll call the police in myself!" gasped Perroza, livid with wrath.

"Oh, you wouldn't do that, deary!"

"By Heaven, I will!"

"It is too bad you never had a voice, Lucretia," said the apparent old woman, but speaking in a man's voice again. "You would have made a handsome tenor, you and Sol Perroza. You'd have done fine in grand opera."

"Stop!" commanded the woman, so fiercely that even her antagonist was cowed for an instant.

"Sh!" he said.

"I tell you I am desperate! Do you think I can afford—afford this scandal?"

"I know right well you can't, Lucretia. That's why I came to you."

"And I told you that other time when you came that I would not be bled."

"So you said. But you will."

"You do not mean to bleed me now, you double-faced scoundrel!" exclaimed Madam Perroza suddenly.

"And that to your only brother, Lucretia? He!"

"I forget that you are my brother!"

"I won't let you forget it—never fear."

"I will not bear with you, Jim."

"You'll help me get away."

"And with your plunder, I suppose?"

"Ah!"

"Oh, I know."

"Well?"

"You didn't expect I would discover your double dealing so quickly."

"Pshaw, Lucretia. I meant to divide."

"You scamp! do I want a part of your ill-gotten gains?"

"Of course you do, Leo," returned Silent Jimmy Radigan calmly. "You always had your share—before you caught Sol, and turned to the respectable game, you know."

"Hush!"

"Then hush yourself," said the man loudly.

"Think what you've got to lose!"

"And think what you've got to lose. I may lose my freedom—though, by thunder, it will be my life I give up before I go back to that hell-on-earth! You'll lose what's as dear to you—your position here."

"Bah! What do I care for these Smalls?" demanded the woman sullenly.

"You care for others—your wealthy and aristocratic friends. You have worked hard enough all these years to sustain them, Leo. And, by jove! what pickings they would make! Ah!"

"And you did some picking last night, as you call it," exclaimed his sister.

"Ho, ho! did the old gentler find it out?" checked Radigan, changing the expression of the old woman's face into a mask of muffled hilarity.

"Ugh!" exclaimed his sister.

"That's good."

"I've been there," declared his sister.

"I knew it. I heard you giving Jeanes the gaff."

"And while I was there the man discovered his loss."

"Loss?" queried Radigan, wrinkling his brows, yet looking amused.

"Don't try to fool me, Jim."

"Never!"

"Well, don't!"

"You're too sharp, Leo."

"And you declared to me you did not get them!" she exclaimed, grinding her teeth. "I ought to give you up to the police."

"Oh, yes, you had!" sneered Radigan. "Why don't you send for the bulls now?"

"I don't have to. He's sent for them."

"Who?" exclaimed Radigan, starting up.

"Ah, that scares you, does it?"

"Who's sent for the bulls?" demanded Radigan ugly.

"I tell you I won't go back to that place alive! And that you're my own blood wouldn't save you if you betrayed me!"

"Bah! you can't frighten me, Jim."

"I don't expect to frighten you. But these fingers would squeeze the wind out o' that pipe o' yours if I thought you'd give me up—remember that!" growled the fellow, crooking his fingers before her eyes suggestively.

Madam Perroza looked at him with a sardonic smile wreathing the corners of her thin lips.

"You're a fool, Jim," she said calmly.

"Oh, I'm a fool, am I?"

"You are that."

"In what way?"

"D'ye think to scare me with such threats?"

"I'll not scare you, I'll do it!" exclaimed Raddigan, with as wicked a look as ever a man wore.

"Suppose I told you that I had sent for the cops myself, and should give you up when they came?" demanded the madam quietly.

She had fallen into the same strain of talk that she had been used to years before—previous to her respectable marriage, and her cutting free from the life which her brother had chosen to continue.

With a suppressed cry of rage the disguised Raddigan sprang from the chair in which he sat as the old lady, Mrs. Manning, and was about to seize his sister by the throat.

"You she-devil!" he hissed.

And then he stopped, shrank back, and slowly stood up. He found himself looking into the blue muzzle of a revolver which Madam Perroza had hidden all the time in her skirt pocket.

"I'd kill you just as soon as you would kill me, Jen," she said softly. "And I don't know but it might be a good move for me at that!"

"You—you——" parted the man.

"There, there! Get your breath, and sit down. If I killed you I'd swear you came to me disguised, and that I was defending my life and honor. I doubt if the police would ever connect Madam Solomon Perroza and Silent Jimmy Raddigan."

"You she-devil!" he again repeated, but this time with something like admiration in his voice.

"Sit down!" she commanded. "Tell me what you did last night."

"I told you, Loo."

"You told me part—what seemed good to you to tell. I want the truth now."

"I told you the truth," he grunted.

"Don't lie!" and she raised the pistol again with such devilish intent that the man actually shrank back from her.

"I—I believe you would!" he breathed, after wetting his lips.

"I only wonder why I don't—now!" she returned harshly.

"Why, I say, Loo——"

"Tell me your story, and I want the particulars," she commanded.

"Oh, hang it! I told you how I got away from that place—where I'd never gone for so long a term if I'd

had a sister with any heart and soul to help me in my defense," added Raddigan bitterly.

"With any money, you mean," responded Madam Perroza. "And I had no money."

"That's a good one!"

"I have none—practically none. What I get here may seem a large sum to you, but I have to dress to fit the station. And a trick I tried to turn the other day—a perfectly legitimate one, at that—was balked by that interfering Bowery Billy."

"The same young dog that sent me up!" gasped Raddigan.

"Aye, and the same young dog that had thwarted you before—and me, too, Jen!"

"Hang him!"

"And according to his tell and yours you run across" each other to-night."

"What?" exclaimed Raddigan.

"I mean it. It's fate. He was the boy who was thrown so violently through the car-window into your lap. He told about it at the theater."

"By Heaven! but he didn't know me!"

"If he had you wouldn't be here now," said his sister.

"Curse the young hound! and he's interfered with me, as you say, before."

"Once when you came so near getting a hold on the captain's wad, eh?"

"And another time right in this house," grunted Raddigan.

"He will be after you now—for he knows you have escaped. I heard him say so."

"And it was he who yanked out the window to that foul next door."

"Yes. He has been within touch of you, Jen."

"Let him have a case," declared Raddigan, with fearful emphasis. "If he gets on my trail again, he will be on dangerous ground. Let him beware!"

"Bah! let us talk about things as they are, not what we'll do—!" sneered Madam Perroza. "Tell me what you did when you so recklessly came to this house last evening."

CHAPTER XIII.

A DESPERATE PLAY.

"I don't know you in this mood, Loo," said her affectionate brother, with continued admiration, and no little fear.

"You'll learn that I am not the girl whom you used to browbeat and drive out into the street to work your schemes for you," said Madam Perrossa bitterly. "Paugh! I thought I had done with you and your kind forever!"

"But the need of the spindulicks—eh?" laughed Raddigan.

"If I am to risk my safety by helping you, I'll have my share of the loot," declared the woman viciously.

"Yer will, huh?"

"Come! I mean what I say. Get on! tell your tale—and set that it is straight."

Thus admonished, the crook went on with his story.

"When I got out of that cursed horse-car—and the kid came near running the wind out o' me for good—I sneaked over here. I remembered the place from my former visit," referring to an occasion when he had tried to do a little second-story work in the Smalls' residence, had been recognized by his sister, and had come near being captured by Bowery Billy.

"There's a way of getting in behind this row of small houses, and I done it," said Raddigan quickly. "I knew your rooms, and I got up to them. But the windows were locked, and I knew that you weren't at home.

"I didn't want to smash the glass to get in. And even if I was inside I might have scared you into screaming, and you'd come upon me in yer rooms. So I laid low on the roof.

"Then I got ter fidgeting— I seen a light in that next house. No use him' idle when an honest penny's to be turned, you know," and Raddigan grinned. "I always was an active chap, Loo."

"Well?"

"So I swung myself over there, and pecked in. There was the guy pawin' over his sparklers—and they are a nifty lot, I tell you, Loo!"

"You evidently have good reason to know," said Madam Perrossa.

"Well, he caught me at it. I was sore played a whole lot by his yelping like a strangled calf out of that wonder. And when I heard that kid howling down-stairs I wasn't feeling pleasant, either. Then you busted that window pane when I popped up before you——"

"That was before the boy started."

"Yep. Before the old guy put his head out the window at all. Never mind. I squeezed in here. And here I be, dewy," continued Raddigan, imitating the shaking

voice of age again. "Here I be, and a trim, nice old lady I be, ain't I, dewy?"

His sister heard him grinning.

"That ain't all," she said.

"That's all I told you when you let me in at the window last night, wasn't it?"

"It was."

"And that's all I had to tell—then," and Raddigan grinned broadly.

"What! you mean to say that after that——?"

"Come!" exclaimed her brother, in no pleasant tone. "You locked yourself into that bedroom, and locked me in here. Did you know I wouldn't clean up this house of some of its fancy-wares before breakfast? Not you. But I didn't. I had some feeling for my dear sister," sneered the man.

"You dag!"

"Thanks. Being of the same blood, you know what you are, then."

"Tell me about those gems," commanded Madam Perrossa sternly.

"Ah! Interested, eh?"

"I'll have my share of them, you second-rate!" she hissed. "You have risked ruining me—aye, you have ruined me, it's likely, for that George Myrick will be in the next house some time to-day, and it won't take him long to piece things together."

"The deuce!" gasped Raddigan.

"And that Bowery Billy half-suspects me, I believe."

"I'll kill that boy yet!" snarled her brother.

"With all my heart!" agreed Madam Perrossa.

"I can't stay here!" gasped Raddigan. "That concerned Myrick has a nose like a hound. He'll see through your bluff in a minute, Loo."

"He hasn't come yet," said his sister grudgingly.

"But he will."

"Not yet."

"But soon?"

"Mr. DeLisle has left it to me to telephone for him," said Madam Perrossa complacently. "You can thank me for nipping any idea of calling the police immediately in the bud, Jim."

"Huh!"

"I'll give you all the time I can" said his sister. "But of course, I must telephone to the man some time to-day. You must get out."

"You'll have to supply the funds, Loo," declared Rad-

"Surprised?" "I tell you I haven't the change of a two-bit piece."

"You've something more valuable—and you haven't told me how you obtained them yet," said his sister grimly, watching him.

"Well!"

"Out with it, Jen!"

"You'd done the same if you'd seen them sparkling," growled the man.

"I've seen them," she returned grimly.

"Hail then 'you know the beauties?'"

"I know their value—which you don't. You'd never be able to dispose of them to any advantage, Jen."

"No, you don't! I handle what boodle's to be made out of 'em myself."

"You'll handle it a mighty short time, then," declared his sister.

"You don't dare——"

"If this business ruins my standing I'll dare anything—I warn you of that, Jeannet Raddigan!"

"Aw, well!"

"Tell me how you got them?"

"I slid out this window again and found, just as I thought, that the old getter had left his window open by mistake. Scared as he was, he'd gone to bed, and left it unlocked, and down an inch or so from the top. You can fancy how easy yer Uncle Jeannet sneaked into the room."

"I didn't fancy hunting around, however. There might be something doing in the watching line, thinks I. So I clean out the drawer he'd put the jewels away in, and slipped back here in a hurry, after shutting the window tighter than he had it himself."

"And then?"

"Here we be!" grinned Jeannet Raddigan.

"Where are the gems?"

"That's telling."

"You'll tell me, sir, or I'll step down-stairs and tele phone for George Myrick right now! And I'll see that you don't get away till he comes," declared Madam Perroca firmly.

"You don't dare?"

"I'll show you what I dare."

"And me in this disguise that you've probably worn yourself forty times?"

"It's a masquerade suit, that's all. I wore it to a ball. I can prove that, Jeannet."

"But that won't save you. You dressed me in it."

"And I'll tell Myrick the truth. I'll tell him that you're my brother. He can know what I was before I was married. And he can know what I have been since. I guess my record is pretty clear, Jen Raddigan."

"And what's to become of me?" demanded her brother desperately. "I tell you; too, I won't go back to that place—only to the chair! Don't you tempt me too far."

"Then what will you do?"

"I'll make some sort of a get-away—and with the stuff, too!"

"Come, Jen, those jewels wouldn't be worth much to you."

"And they'll not be worth a penny to you—unless you show some sisterly feeling, and help me out."

"Sisterly feeling—bah!"

"I mean it. We're both off the same tree. You had luck in marriage, that's all."

"And you might have had luck in a decent business half a dozen times."

"Not after I'd got a record. I know the bulls and fly-cops of this little old burg. They'll hound a man with a record until he has to do something dirty and divide with 'em—the thieves!"

"Could we try that on Myrick?" murmured Madam Perroca.

Raddigan burst into a hoarse laugh.

"Sh! you fool!" exclaimed his sister. "He'll get right on your trail, Jeannet—he's sure to."

"Curse him! And on yours, too!"

"I'll manage to save myself some way," said the woman.

"But not at my expense, curse you!" gasped Raddigan, starting up again.

"Sit down. I'm not selling my own flesh and blood—if it behaves," said Madam Perroca. "But I've got to call up headquarters and ask Mr. Myrick to call on Mr. DeLisle. You can imagine just how long you'll have to yourself after he arrives here, Jen. And those stones——"

"Well?"

"You can't sell 'em. And if I dabble with them Myrick will surely get on my trail, too."

"What's to be done, then?"

"If we only could make time! If I had a chance to dispose of some of those stones——"

"How, you fool? You try to pawn them in the usual way, and see what would happen to you—even if the cops weren't on to the robbery."

"No, no. But I can drive in my carriage to certain antique stores, and sell one or two at a time. I would never be suspected that way—until afterward. And then it wouldn't matter."

"They're worth more than I thought!" gasped Raddigan.

"Why do you say that?"

"If you're willing to take such risks? If you sold them you'd be spotted sure."

"In time, yes."

"If Myrick was on the case, it would be soon."

"But suppose we should keep Myrick off the case for a while—keep it from the police entirely, I mean?" suggested his sister, leaning forward, her eyes snapping with excitement.

"What do you mean?"

"You call yourself a desperate man, Jimmy Raddigan. Are you desperate enough to do something really bold?"

"What's got into the woman?" murmured her brother, drawing back slowly.

"Answer me! do you dare?"

"Let's hear what it is," whispered Raddigan.

Madam Perroux drew nearer, and hastily whispered several sentences in his ear. The changes of emotion which swept Raddigan's pale face were marvellous.

"You she-devil!" he gasped again. "It's—it's stupendous!"

"Do you dare?"

"I'll dare anything to turn this trick successfully—and to have you for a partner afterward, old woman!" he cried.

"It's a bargain!" returned Madam Perroux.

They shook hands upon it.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE THING THAT PUZZLED MYRICK.

"Two days gone, Billy, and I haven't seen you turn in Raddigan—or are you keeping him up your sleeve?" laughed George Myrick, as Billy came into his office at headquarters.

"No!"

"What's the matter with Billy Barlow, the winner?" gibed the detective.

"Say! youse ain't got him yerself, have yer?" demanded Bowery Billy.

"No, sir."

"Yet youse is on de case all right, all right."

"What's that?"

"Aw, cripes! ain't I a friend of yours?" demanded Billy. "Yer keepin' somethin' dark from me. An' maybe I might help yer erbout dat break at DeLisle's, at dat."

Myrick looked at his young friend with a quizzical smile.

"So you might help me about this case of—er—who did you say?"

"Of DeLisle's. Right, nex' door to me friends, de Smalls, youse know."

"Oh, yes, indeed," Myrick reached for a city directory, and thumbed the leaves quickly.

"This DeLisle lives at—er—Roman DeLisle, is it?"

"Green barones! Wat kind of a bluff is dis, Mr. Myrick? Of course youse know his name. Youse was dere yesterday, for my friend—me partic'lar friend—Miss Edie, seed youse. And dat Madam Perroux said youse was on de case."

"Oh, well, if they've both told you so it's no use my denying it," laughed Myrick.

"An' say, I'm as curious as er grand widdler. Wat's deen't?"

"Well, Billy——"

"Now, don't begin dat way, for yer never tells me nothin' w'en yer does."

Myrick laughed heartily, and still quizzed Billy cheerfully.

"So your lady friends, saw me call on this—er—Mr. DeLisle, did they?"

"Miss Edie said de madam pointed youse out to her. She knowed you was to be called in. Wat DeLisle lost de odder night w'en he kicked up such a combobersation he ain't tellin'."

"Ah! You told me about that."

"Of course I did. And I told you w'en I fought erbout it, too," said Billy disgruntled. "I was lookin' fer dat Raddigan ter show up eround dere. He's somethin' ter dat Perroux woman—wat, I don't see."

"Oh, he is?"

"Sure!"

"And you told me you thought that he stirred up this—er—Mr. DeLisle, de odder night?"

"Sure!"

"Well?"

"Aw, cripes! don't run er fellin'. Can't yer let me in on de game? I've been spyin' around de house ever since, but I can't make notin' out of it. I've pumped de servants an' dey ain't been er livin' soul dere ter see Madam Perroza, but an' old skort named Manning, dat lives over on de East Side—I went an' seed her to make sure."

"And you think I know more than you do?"

"Why, youse has been called in on de case by Mr. DeLisle. Maybe youse is puzzled, an' I might help yer out, Mr. Myrick. Yer knows de story of de monse wot nibbled de corns off de kin's paw, don't yer?"

"That's a new version of an old story, Billy."

"Well, 'twas suthin' like dat."

"And you say I may be puzzled?"

"Shucks! yer might be."

"I am."

Billy's eyes sparkled,

"Wot erbout?" he asked.

"I'm puzzled to know what I was called to Mr. DeLisle's home for."

"How's dat?"

"Yes, that's what puzzles me. And, besides, that your little friend should have seen me 'go in.'"

Billy stared at him with bulging eyes.

"For, you see, Billy," said the detective, still smiling, "this is the first I've heard of it. I don't know what Mr. DeLisle lost, for the very good reason that he hasn't consulted me. And I certainly haven't been in that part of the town for a week."

Billy sat down—hard! He stared at the gentleman breathlessly, but finally managed to speak:

"Dere's—dere's—surprin'—doin'!"

"To the man up a tree it looks that way, Billy."

"Who—wot——"

"Just so, Billy."

"Aw, say! de Madam Perroza's a peach!"

"You're sure she is in de thing, are you?" demanded Mr. Myrick. "But she certainly is not calling on this DeLisle man in my character."

"Green bananas!" suddenly shouted Billy.

"Ah!"

"D'ye see it, Mr. Myrick?"

"Do I see what?"

"Raddigan!"

"Your hard remarks, Billy, fail to 'put me wise,' as you say yourself."

"Dat Raddigan is a wonder. He could make up like de very Old Boy!"

"Very easy, I fancy," laughed Mr. Myrick.

"Don't josh!"

"You think this ought to be looked into, do you?"

"Great lumbenboots! youse wouldn't miss such a case, would yer?"

"I'm not proud. I don't know as I am flattered by the delicate attention of somebody masquerading as me."

"Dere's somebody pullin' dat DeLisle man's leg—an' I bet it's Raddigan, and dat Madam Perroza is in on it."

"You're anxious to get the madam right, are you, Billy?"

"Youse kin betcher bottom dollar I be!"

"But don't lose sight of the fact that if you create a scandal for her that your friends, the Smalls, may suffer, too."

"Aw, cripes! ain't I tinkin' of dat? I tell youse, Mr. Myrick, if we gits er case on her, we'll likely hafter let her go just ter save Miss Edie trouble."

"Why haven't you warned the girl and her uncle—and Hushrouse, their lawyer—against the woman?"

"I have. But I ain't had notin' sure against her. An' dey don't believe me. I gotter git her where she'll hait er break away herself ter save her neck—an' I'm maseen' me guess if dis don't prove ter be de time we toles de old hen off her nest for good!"

"Well, Billy, I am certainly curious," admitted Myrick, "and we'll go up there and look into this business to-day. I'm busy all the forenoon; but meet me at the Bartholdi at two o'clock, and we'll lunch, and you can take me up to your Madison avenue friends. We'll see if they know me from the masquerader."

CHAPTER XV.

THE DOUBLE.

Billy was not usually late at an appointment; but there was a hold-up in the subway, and he arrived at the Bartholdi Hotel a quarter of an hour past the time agreed upon. He found George Myrick standing at the door of the hotel-office, looking out on Broadway.

The detective seized Billy by the shoulder, and drew him aside.

"No lunch for us to-day, my boy. I've important business with Commissioner Orringham. And since I've been here I've made a curious discovery."

"Yer look so, Mr. Myrick. Wot is it?" demanded

Billy, who had never seen the detective appear more disturbed than he did at this identical moment.

"Billy!" exclaimed the detective, with his usual humorous twinkle coming back into his eyes behind his glasses, "there are two of me!"

"Say! wot's dis apin' yer givin' me?" gasped Billy.

"Did you know that I was a dual personality?"

"Say! is dis Christian Science, 'r Spiritualism, 'r Theosophy? It gits by me!"

"Suppose you met a fellow on the street who was exactly like yourself in every particular?"

"I'd hock him!" declared Billy promptly. "There's only one simon-pure, blown-in-de-bottle Bowery Billy on de map! Aw, cripes! I think I'd stand for a double!"

"Well, there you have it exactly! I have a double," said Myrick.

"Aw, chee!"

"It's a fact, Billy. I've seen him with my own eyes."

"Where?"

"Right in this hotel—there! Come with me! I'll give you a sight of him, and something more. If I hadn't this engagement with Colonel Coringham I'd follow the fellow myself. But you must, Billy."

He hurried Billy diagonally across the street. They reached the point of the Flatiron Building just as a little crowd "went ashore" after making the passage from the Bartholdi corner. And among the party was a figure that drew a gasp of surprise from Bowery Billy.

Gray suit, eye-glasses, brown derby, gray mustache cropped very close—even to the crow's feet about the corners of his eyes, this stranger was George Myrick to the life!

"There he goes, Billy," said Myrick. "If you are sure that I am myself and that that fellow is somebody else—follow him!"

In an instant the real detective was gone—having boarded an up-town car. The double crossed to the Fifth Avenue Hotel sidewalk, and strolled up Broadway, Billy, in vast amazement, following in the rear.

The Bowery boy had seen Silent Jimmy Raddigan in several disguises. As the sharp-confidence man of Broadway he was an entirely different looking individual from the tough party who had once, with Silly Andy, tried to "do" old Cap'n Ben Smalls on the Bowery.

As the sound pirate, Raddigan had been still another-appearing individual. But of all his disguises this was the most perfect! He was George Myrick to the life!

The detective dressed quietly and was unobtrusive of manner. He cultivated an appearance that would leave him unmarked and unremembered by the ordinary man. Yet there was something distinctive in his dress—even to the flower, always worn in his button-hole—which Raddigan (if this were he) had copied to the life.

The detective's double walked on calmly, and turned through just the street that Billy expected him to turn through. It brought him to the corner of Madison avenue nearest to the Smalls and DeLisle houses.

Billy was so excited and interested that he almost forgot that he might be spied upon himself. But he remained around the corner until he saw the detective's double ascend the steps to the DeLisle house, ring the bell, and be admitted.

Billy then boldly presented himself at the door of the Smalls house and asked to see Miss Edie.

The girl came down to him, and it didn't take half a glance on Billy's part to assure him that she had been crying.

"Wot's de matter, Miss Edie?" he demanded. "Let me hock him!"

"Lick who?"

"De feller dat made yer toin on yer tear-taps."

"You can't thrash her, Billy. It was Madam Perron. I never knew her to be so cross. And all because I said I'd told you about seeing your friend, Mr. Myrick, go in next door. And he just went in again a minute ago!"

"So she was mad, was she?" murmured Billy. "Wot did she tell you for in de foist place, den?"

"Why, I chanced to hear her telephoning to Mr. Myrick for Mr. DeLisle. It is about the robbery, you know."

"Oh! den dere was a robbery?"

"Why, so it seems! but Madam Perron doesn't know what Marie found out from one of Mr. DeLisle's men. He listened at the door when Mr. DeLisle and 'this Mr. Myrick were talking it over—masy thing! I suppose all servants listen."

"Well, it's gona."

"Gona?"

"Yes. Ten thousand dollars' worth. Antique jewels. Isn't that awful?"

"Whew!"

"And Madam Perron almost bowed my ears" just now!"

Billy turned red, and then pale.

"See here, Miss Edith," he blurted out, "would youse be terribb disappointed if dis Madam Perroza left youse?"

"No, I wouldn't! I'm real mad, Billy. And when uncle comes home——"

"When'll dat be?"

"To-morrow, or next day?"

"If youse tink youse could git erlong wifout er chap-eron till den?" demanded Billy, his eyes twinkling. "If yer can't, I know an' old lady down on de East Side—Mudder Maguire—dat would mebbe come up here an' do de proper fer youse. If anybody said she warn't re- spectable, she'd break deir face! Dat's de kind of a chap-eron she is!"

"Oh, dear, Billy! You are ridiculous. I have a mind to go and visit Bessie for a day or two, anyway."

"Bessie Hardress?"

"Yes."

"Jest de chance! Do it. An' meanwhile, jest let me have er rag-chewin' wif' Madam Perroza."

"Billy!"

"A talkest, den?"

"But she won't see you."

"Youse let me send James up to her wif' somethin'. She'll see me," said Billy, wagging his head.

"James!" called Miss Edith, hearing the footman passing.

Billy rapidly wrote on a card he picked up from the table:

"Will you have the reserves at the next door in ten minutes, or will you talk to me?—Bowery Billy."

James laughingly accepted this scribble, and went up with it on his salver. It is possible that he pointed at it in the hall, being curious; but he probably made nothing of it. Madam Perroza did, however.

She flew into a towering rage, and tore the card to fragments, throwing them on the floor, and stamping upon them. Then she grew suddenly calm.

"Tell that boy to come up here!" she commanded the footman.

The instant she was alone she ran to the window looking out on the roof of the captain's cabin. Opening this, she coughed three times loudly. Then closed the window.

But as she turned from the casement she could not re- press a start, for Bowery Billy, grinning broadly, was

already in the room. He had stood right at James' back when the card was being delivered.

"Dat's all right, Madam Perroza," said the police- special. "If I'd wanted ter nab him, I wouldn't have give you de chance ter warn him. But I'll take me chances wif Silent Jimmy later. Dis is on you. I got youse right at last, an' I'm wadin' ter give 'way a little for de sake er puttin' youse out of de rumble' here."

"What do you mean, you abominable boy?" demanded the madam.

"Don't put up no bluff ter me, lady. It don't go," said Billy, shaking his head. "Er long time ago I told Phil Erwin youse'd hear watchin'. Here de odder day youse and I come part' near gettin' tergedder in dat Bianca Stradella case. But youse wasn't doin' nothin' really criminal dere—nothin' we could git youse on. Angelo would have had ter stand fer dat if we'd caught him."

"But now I've got youse right. We been lookin' youse up. De woman wot married Sol Perroza, de bar-itone, had a perfide record—only de dago didn't know it. She come of er bad family. Deir re'l names was Rad- digua."

"Now, youse don't want me ter spread all dis out fer de readin' of de rich swells youse has been travellin' wif' ter years. An' if yer press me I has ter do it—see?"

"If I gadder in yer brudder, Silent Jimmy, at dis time, de hull t'ing'll come out. I don't want no make things bad fer de friends of Miss Edith an' de old cap'n."

"Youse come down wifout bein' shot, like Darry Crockett's coon, an' I'll let up on youse hot."

"I deny that you can do anything to me!" exclaimed Madam Perroza.

"Aw, cheere it! I can put 'bot' youse an' Jimmy be- hind de bars before night—and send him back where he belongs, an' you wif' him! Youse know dat, ma'am. Wot's de use of gaslin'? I'll ketch Jimmy yet. But I'll take him somewhere else, and won't mix you up in it if youse'll do two things."

"What are they?" demanded the woman sullenly.

Billy glanced around at the littered apartment with twinkling eyes.

"One t'ing youse was gittin' ready for. Youse is leavin' dis ranch instanter, bek?"

"What if I was?"

"Dat's all right, den. Youse leave before to-morrow mornin', an' dat is all I ask up dat hne. Den de odder t'ing——"

"Well?" she snapped.

"I want them jooks,"

"What?"

"Youse don't make no get-away wit' dem—nix! I gits de jooks an' sends 'em back as dough comin' from Mr. Myrick. De tou'll give Myrick er boost at dat!" and he laughed.

"You—I—"

"Don't choke, ma'am," said Billy commiseratingly.

"I could kill you, Bowery Billy!"

"Youse ain't likely to. De ladies m'ly takes ter me like kids do ter bread an' molasses. I'm sorry dat you ain't no friend."

"I'm your enemy!" exclaimed Madam Perros, grinding her teeth.

"But youse is a wise enemy," said Billy seriously. "You'll give up de jooks. And Jammy and you'll try some odder lay. Is dat right?"

The woman flung herself into her bedroom, and returned in a moment with a bag that she cast at his feet. Billy picked it up and thrust it into his pocket, without even looking at the contents of the bag.

"I'm takin' dem on trust, madam," he said quietly. "If dey's short, or phoney, it's all off, an' youse is nabbed instanter. Understand?"

"I am wise, as you say, Bowery Billy!" returned the woman homely.

"Dat's right!"

"But, let me tell you something, sir! Don't you cross my path again—don't you dare!"

"If yer path is honest, old lady, I ain't likely to," said Billy.

"For when you do again you will be on dangerous ground—as you are at the moment!"

"I'll move, den," said Billy, grinning, and darting to one side. "I knows youse is a hard nut to crack, ma'am. But if yer cuts loose from yer brudder, an' lets him shift fer himself as he oughter, I reckon you an' me won't meet no more."

With that Billy went down-stairs, whistling. He sent for Edith, and told her that he would wait and take her to Miss Hardress herself, and Edie, still half-carefully, and much disturbed, hurried her preparations, and went with him.

All Billy ever told Edith about the affair did not include much that was bad against Madam Perros.

It was her brother that Billy showed as the criminal,

and Edith saw how impossible it was that madam should remain longer in the house after what had happened next door. The madam had tried to shield her brother from the consequences of his wrong-doing, and had, indeed, helped him to escape.

To Mr. Ornn Hadsbroke, who acted as Miss Edith's and the captain's legal adviser, Billy "talked straight."

"Why didn't you come to me with your suspicions of this Perros woman before?" demanded the counsellor sternly.

"Because dey warn't nothin' but suspicions. I couldn't prove nothin' against her," declared the Bowery boy. "I knows you, counsellor. Youse wouldn't take nothin' but re'l evidence, an' I didn't have none before."

The real Mr. Myrick returned the gems (which were loaned) to Mr. Roman DeLisle. He even called on that gentleman, and to prove how perfect had been Raddigan's masquerade, Mr. DeLisle did not know that there were two "George Myricks!"

Raddigan disappeared, and as it was known that Madam Perros had pawned her jewels, and had retired to a scotchably-respectable boarding-house, it was fair to guess how the escaped convict had secured money with which to make his get away.

"Nipped in the bud, Billy—nipped in the bud," said Mr. George Myrick, rubbing his hands over the matter. "If you hadn't taken that dive through that ear-window the other evening, this Raddigan and his sister might have pulled off not only that very clever robbery, but have gone farther, and done worse."

"Perhaps the woman has had a lesson. She may refuse to be drawn back into the life she led as a girl, after all."

"Dat's all right, Mr. Myrick, an' maybe I'm prejudiced against dat old sheet. But I means ter keep me eye peeled for her."

"You do, Billy?"

"I do. I got a hunch dat we'll hear someth'ing of dat old goil again. She's got de makin's of er bad one in her all right, all right, an' don't youse fergit wot yer Uncle Billy tells yer."

"Very well, my philosophical young friend," returned Mr. Myrick gravely. "We'll wait and see!"

THE END.

Next week's issue, No. 76, is entitled, "Bowery Billy's April Fool; or, Bursting a Financial Bubble."

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